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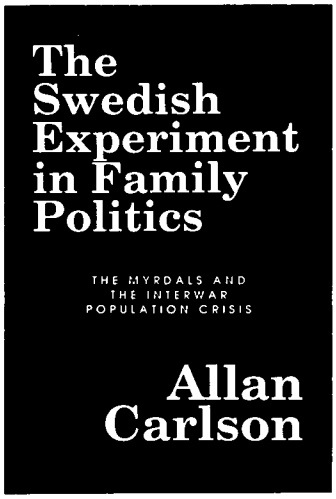

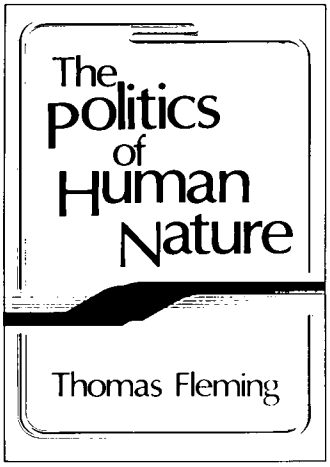

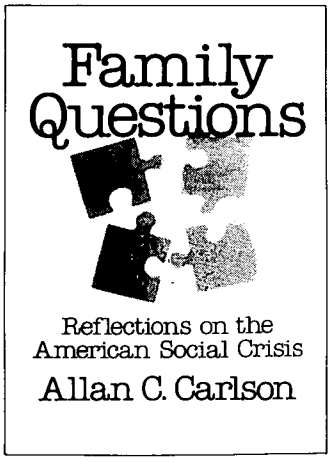

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"If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and never will be."
—Thomas Jefferson

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Janet Scott Barlow, Odie Faulk, Jane Greer, John Shelton Reed, Gary Vasilash

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ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER
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PUBLICATION DIRECTOR
Guy C. Reffett

COMPOSITION MANAGER
Anita Fedora

CIRCULATION MANAGER
Rochelle Frank

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On 'Common-Sense Sociology'

Steven Goldberg's "Sociology and Common Sense" (March 1991) contains some bits of wisdom, but its central premise is badly flawed. I first encountered the "Common-Sense Sociology Test" as a graduate student in the early 1960's, and by then it was at least a decade or two old, so its ancestry is considerably older than Goldberg claims. Like Professor Goldberg, I have felt uncomfortable when reading many such quizzes, particularly those that appear in sociology texts. Yes, many of them are questionable or just plain wrong, and the examples he presents offer eloquent testimony to that fact.

One of the main problems with such quizzes is that they fail on the criterion of *specificity*: the generalizations they make are so broad the student senses that one question is being asked while, in fact, a very different one is addressed. To be effective, such questions must be worded in such a way that they are *specific*, *concrete*, and *permit only one possible interpretation*. In the second edition of my introductory sociology textbook (1988), I included just such a "common-sense" quiz. Are these statements true or false? The South has the highest homicide or murder rate of all regions in the country. (True.) Blacks have a higher suicide rate than whites. (False.) The higher the social class, the higher the likelihood that someone will drink alcohol. (True.) The divorced have a lower likelihood of getting married in the future than someone of the same age who has never been married. (False.) Here, there is no possibility of misinterpretation, as there is in Goldberg's examples. And the answers to all the questions I asked about, again, unlike some of those Professor Goldberg cites, are solidly established empirically. The last time I gave such a quiz, the class as a whole got the right answer 48 percent of the time. Thus, while I agree with Goldberg's point that many such quizzes ask poor questions, they can nevertheless be effectively worded and used as instruments to argue against relying on common sense.

However, my objection to Goldberg's argument runs far deeper than this. His main point—that common sense is accurate with respect to *observations* but wrong with respect to *explanations*—is egregiously wrong, as my common-sense quiz shows. The fact is, many—most—undergraduates do not notice a great many things that take place around them; they have an extremely mistaken view of the size and shape of the social world. Their preconceptions lead them to use their observations to make erroneous generalizations about who does what, how, under what circumstances, and—as Goldberg agrees—why. Permit me to submit two exhibits in support of my position, both taken from social psychology, not sociology.

Exhibit A: *Eyewitness Testimony*. As research on eyewitness testimony has shown—overwhelmingly and convincingly—people are extremely poor observers of what takes place right in front of them. Moreover, individuals listening to eyewitness testimony have a great deal of confidence that what they are being told is accurate and valid. Again and again, we see that eyewitnesses mistakenly identify perpetrators, recall details of events that don't exist, introduce nonexistent objects, forget crucial details, and are influenced by erroneous post-event cues. Research does not say that eyewitness testimony is *sometimes* wrong with respect to major details—it is *usually* wrong with respect to *most* major details. On the most basic level, contrary to Goldberg's assertion, people are extremely poor observers; human observation is deeply flawed, unreliable, and often inaccurate.

Exhibit B: *Judgmental Heuristics*. Much of what people "know" to be true is wrong, fundamentally distorted by invalid inferential strategies, as an entire school of social psychologists has shown. The commonsensical techniques of reasoning of the so-called "common man" and "common woman" fail to yield correct answers when applied to realms other than the mundane, quotidian world. People tend to be far more influenced by what they

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are able to recall than what does not come readily to mind (the "availability" heuristic), and they are far more influenced by the features of things that resemble one another than those that don't (the "representativeness" heuristic). Thus, students think that interracial violence is far more common than it is because it is often reported in the media, it is vivid, and it readily sticks in one's mind; white students usually think that most welfare recipients are black—when, in reality, most are white—because of their profound ignorance of the difference between proportions and absolute numbers.

The fact is, most students—and the hypothetical man and woman on the street—are neither good observers *nor* accurate with respect to explanations. They often—and under certain circumstances, usually—make erroneous observations. They walk around believing that certain entirely mistaken generalizations are true. Many do not know the difference between an assertion and a fact. Or how to document an assertion or a generalization. Or how ideology may influence the observations that they and others make about the social world. Many cannot reach a reasonable conclusion even after they have been supplied with evidence bearing on a given question. The problem is far more profound than Professor Goldberg suggests: it is most people's observations *and* explanations that need training. We do not have to have the observational acuity of an Erving Goffman to know that, for most people, being able to observe events accurately in the external world is a chancy business, one that would be improved by making use of a systematic discipline such as sociology or social psychology.

—*Erich Goode*
Professor of Sociology
State University of New York
Stony Brook, NY

Mr. Goldberg Replies:

The purpose of the "Common-Sense Sociology Test" is to demonstrate that which cannot be demonstrated: that many of the *observations* made by students (and conclusions closely connected to observations) are faulty and that these can be corrected by an acceptance of "opposite" observations made by sociologists, "opposite" observations that are usually concordant with an ideology that is shared by the majority of academic sociologists.

To choose a typical example: the "correct" answer to the true/false question, "The income gap between male and female workers has narrowed in recent years," is: "[It] has widened rather than narrowed; women hold few high-paying positions and the average working white woman earns less than the average working black man."

Now, the freshman student, who is unfamiliar with the full meaning of the term "income gap," clearly thinks that he is being asked whether a woman performing the same job as a man now receives a more-nearly equal income than she formerly would have. The student responds that a woman does, and this would have to be incorrect for the test to have its desired effect of making the student understand that one of his basic beliefs is incorrect. The test cannot do this, of course, because the student is correct. That the same forces that have made this true have also brought large numbers of women into the labor force at entry-level positions (thereby increasing the "income gap") is interesting, but not in the least surprising to a student to whom is explained what the question and this term literally mean.

A lack of specificity is often the method that enables the test to *seem* to demonstrate that the student is incorrect. But it is the tendentious and false "answer"—and not a mere and easily corrected lack of specificity—that is the deeper problem. That this is the case is clear from the fact that neither Professor Goode nor anyone else can, by increasing the specificity of the questions on the test, enable the questions to demonstrate successfully to the student that his deeply held beliefs are incorrect. Specificity serves to demonstrate to the student that his beliefs are *correct*.

My general point is that the observations people repeatedly make over time are astonishingly correct and that the sociologist's legitimate role is to *explain* that which is observed, not to pretend that the observation is incorrect.

Professor Goode attempts to refute this in three ways. First, he points out that eyewitness accounts are notoriously inaccurate. This is certainly as correct as it is irrelevant; I wrote not of observations made midst gunfire and mayhem, but ones made repeatedly and over time. Second, in his discussion of judgmental heuristics, Professor Goode gives only the examples of interracial violence and blacks on welfare to make his point. To be analogous with the basic beliefs considered by the test we discuss, it would have to be the case that students are incorrect in their beliefs that more blacks attack whites than *vice versa* and that *disproportionate* numbers of blacks are on welfare. The students are not, of course, incorrect. That they are incorrect about the *absolute* figures relevant here hardly casts doubt on any basic, observationally based beliefs.

Third, Professor Goode offers alternative test questions. The question about social class and drinking strikes me as unsurprising or surprising only in the illegitimate way in which the questions are presented on the Common-Sense Sociology Test. Read literally, the question is sufficiently specific, but I doubt that many students—picturing the cocktail party of the well-to-do—are particularly surprised that as high a percentage of the higher classes drink, if "drink" means "ever taking a drink." I suspect that most students—who, after all, are freshmen on their first day of college—misread and interpreted the question as "members of the lower class drink more" (i.e., have a higher *per capita* rate of consumption and alcoholism). A colleague specializing in the study of alcoholism tells me that this question is complicated methodologically, but that a strong case can be made for a "false" answer.

Professor Goode's other two questions have the virtue of specificity and clarity, but they are not in the least surprising—at least they were not to half of my students nor to half of Professor Goode's (results that we would expect if the students have no strongly held beliefs about the issues). In contrast, the incorrect "answers" to the test we discussed were surprising to nearly all of my students, as I'm sure they would be to Professor Goode's.

I would *hope* that we could make a test of questions that, on the first day of class, only half the students answered

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correctly. After all, the average student gets only about three-quarters of the questions right on the last day of class. I never implied that we don't teach them anything, only that what we teach them has to do with the explanation of that which is observed, not with the incorrectness of their correct observations.

On 'The Institute for Advanced Study'

Jacob Neusner's fierce attack upon the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton (Cultural Revolutions, December 1990) is not as well-informed nor as balanced as one would expect from a scholar of his eminence.

Neusner claims that the permanent faculty of its schools of historical studies and social sciences "are not prominent, though they publish," and he castigates them for failing to conduct "collaborative research projects with generations of IAS members, though they may chat with them from day to day." During my own period of residence at IAS, which was contemporary with that of Professor Neusner, I was indeed privileged to "chat" on a daily basis with a scholar of outstanding brilliance and international renown who, though *emeritus*, was available for consultation in his office six days a week and who gave as generously of his knowledge as anyone I have ever met. Such "chats" were invariably illuminating, even if they were unstructured, though I have to confess to an inability to comprehend why collaborative research in the strict sense of the term is inherently preferable or more intellectually valid than that which is undertaken on an independent and individual basis.

To establish as the criterion for sitting on the board of directors of IAS the ability to contribute "one million dollars a year at a minimum," as Neusner recommends, would no doubt improve matters financially—if that indeed is the overriding goal of any academic institution, whether it be devoted to teaching or research. But is it, or should it be? Neusner also complains about the "mostly-male and lily-white character of the Institute." Whatever the composition of its board at present, it is hard to see that such a prescription would do anything more than to entrench further that element whose influence he is, with some justification, anxious to reduce. It should also be pointed out that Neusner wholly ignores the quite extraordinary radical diversity of its visiting members at any one session.

The decision by IAS to decline funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities was not a case of telling the NEH "to take its money and shove it," to use Neusner's quaint terminology, but the result of a determination to set and maintain its own standards of accountability. Such a determination is not a manifestation of dangerously irresponsible hauteur. Any self-governing body has a right and indeed an obligation to refuse funding from *any* source, whether public or private, if it has reason to suspect that the acceptance of it would be prejudicial to its long-term interests, assuming that these interests do not conflict with the vision and ideals of contemporary society. Manifestly this is not so in the present instance.

Very considerable though my respect is for Jacob Neusner as a scholar, my disagreement with his characterization of life at IAS is profound. Perhaps this is because what I regard as the institute's greatest strength, namely its accountability to scholarship and scholarly excellence, rather than to the vested interest of one or other political opinion, he seems to perceive as a fatal flaw. As a British scholar who came to this country six years ago with little prospects of making headway in my own university system, who now has tenure and a full professorship, I am immensely grateful to the United States, not only for providing me with an opportunity to practice my specialized skills, but, no less important, for generously funding my research projects. I have also witnessed firsthand the debilitating and near-terminal impact of populist-style politics on British intellectual and academic life. Such populism should not be allowed to prevail in this country. Britain possesses nothing remotely comparable to IAS for those working in the social sciences and historical studies, and for this reason I am perhaps more sensitive than Neusner to the uniqueness of the institution that he would seek to reform out of recognition. For myself, IAS possesses a remarkable environment, created by outstanding scholars of international renown, some permanent, many visiting, and I wish to set my own conviction and experience alongside Neusner's, lest his should prevail unanswered. America has every reason to take pride in the uncompromising integrity of the institution that it has fostered.

—Robert Garland
Professor of Classics
Colgate University
Hamilton, NY

Dr. Neusner Replies:

The Institute for Advanced Study is made up of a few buildings, a pile of money, and a permanent faculty burdened by an enormously inflated opinion of itself. But my esteemed friend, Professor Garland, and I do not differ so radically as would appear to be the case. He correctly points to Professor Homer Thompson, but others at IAS do not strive to meet Professor Thompson's high standard of civility and collegiality. It would be unseemly to narrate a variety of anecdotal cases that convey a different picture. When IAS declined NEH funding, it demanded that Congress rewrite legislation to accommodate IAS; that is not the same thing as declining funds. The rules that the NEH applies to all research institutes in the country, deemed fair and reasonable everywhere else, were supposed to be suspended; that seemed to many to be arrogant. I understand matters have now resolved themselves, for which everyone must be grateful. Turning back the money, after all, did no harm to the permanent professors, only to the members who would lose their year of study because of local hauteur. IAS is distinguished in some areas (math and particle physics) and mediocre in others (social science and some areas of history, including art history). But Professor Garland and I concur that IAS provides a fine opportunity for sustained research, and those who use the place well, as did he and I, can only be glad for it. But a research institute would have to be considerably more distinguished than is IAS to sustain and justify the extraordinarily high opinion that some of its permanent faculty have of themselves. In the end, the place is as good as the members of any given year,

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and, in my year, I found many first-rate minds whose company I treasured and who remain valued friends.

I am puzzled by the claim that Britain has nothing comparable to IAS, since I have been appointed Visiting Fellow at Clare Hall, Cambridge University, to pursue research there in 1992. But that does not detract from my admiration for Professor Garland and my pleasure in addressing his points.

On 'Vermont's Secession'

Frank Bryan's "The Case for Vermont's Secession" (April 1991) was heartwarming to those of us who believe that Abraham Lincoln was the midwife to the Leviathan that today straddles the Potomac River, and that the U.S. Constitution was the most important casualty of the American Civil War.

I wish Mr. Bryan and his sympathizers the best of luck in moving toward secession. While I find no fault in his reasoning, there are two negative factors I don't believe he has considered. First, if Vermont secedes, what will it do about the millions of refugees streaming in from the remaining 49 states (myself included)? Second, you will probably all be shot.

Still, freedom *is* such a cheerful and tempting prospect.

—J. Michael Bolinski
Devon, PA

CULTURAL REVOLUTIONS

THE NOW FAMOUS VIDEO of the Los Angeles police beating did not, for me, evoke the formulaic outrage that the media intended. Instead, strangely, it brought back a flood of memories from my misspent youth, a year of which was passed as a reporter on the "police beat" of a daily newspaper in a medium-sized city. Every day I was in and around the station house, the courts, and scenes of crime and disaster (which, among other things, has made me a better historian than if I had spent the same time in a library).

In those days it was not a foregone conclusion that when there was a difference of opinion between a law officer and a felon, a reporter would always side with the felon. I had other advantages as well: I was the son of a fire captain who had more than once been subjected to sniper fire by "civil rights" activists while trying to keep neighbors' houses from burning down. For these and other reasons, my liberal education had not taken and my sympathies were generally with the cops, humanly flawed as they often were.

One day off duty I saw an incident that crystallized a lifelong determination to always give the police the benefit of the doubt. I was on my way from lunch, walking across the main square of Charlotte, literally the busiest spot in the Carolinas, and thronged with the noon crowd. A young man was coming down the sidewalk toward me. He was white, about 19, clean-cut, and neatly dressed. Without warning, he began striking people in the face with his fist as he passed them.

The only authority in sight was a short, overweight policeman, well into middle age. He ran puffing down the block and grappled with the youth, trying to restrain him. The officer soon saw he was getting the worst of it. He gave the young man a tap with his nightstick—a quite gentle tap under the circumstances. That did not do the trick and was followed by a second.

Imagine the reaction of the passers-by who came upon the scene only at the end. They saw a nice-looking young man lying on the sidewalk with blood flowing from his head, an unprepossessing policeman hovering over him with a club. I noted the oohs and ahs issuing from three very well-dressed women, of the incorrigible upper-middle-class do-gooder type, who had just come up. It was clear where their sympathies lay.

For the policeman, it was a no-win. Suppose he had not subdued the aggressor? The same women would have been screaming at the failure of protection. For all I know he was chewed out the next day by the chief, who was much more interested in fitting in at the country club than in the welfare of his men. Lesson: our reactions are often aesthetic and self-indulgent when they ought to be rational and ethical. Spoiled Americans want to rule the world and live in prosperity and safety, but we get in a dudgeon when reminded of the ugly details.

President Bush is a cultural type of exactly the same cut as the three women, who were undoubtedly the wives of transplanted Northern corporation executives, eager to believe the worst of a red-neck Southern cop. The President avowed that what he saw of the Rodney King tape "sickened" him. I seem to recall a campaign clip of the President shoulder to shoulder in solidarity with the Boston police. But maybe that was only a campaign position, like being against taxes and affirmative action.

As far as I know, no one pointed out that this fastidious TV viewer had recently given orders by which 100,000 Iraqis were incinerated or otherwise had their lives terminated. Many of them doubtless were very decent human beings by comparison with Rodney King. They seem in most cases merely to have been trying to get away, and not contemplating a felony.

Aside from his irrepressible New England priggishness, which causes him to refer all public issues back to his private emotions, Bush is not that different from the rest of us. He is a victim of the moral obtuseness of what Richard Weaver called "the spoiled child mentality" and of the strange mental disconnections that afflict people whose idea of the world is formed by publicity and television. Of course, the President's military minions, unlike the police, did not have the media taping the more unseemly aspects of their mission, which was kept neat and upbeat for the viewers back home.

It is axiomatic that we can never—never—trust the media to tell the truth about these things. They will always make the police look as bad and the criminals as good as possible, suppressing essential facts and contexts to serve their agenda. There are still a few of us around who remember accurately

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the day of the Kennedy assassination. For the first few hours, Cronkite ("the most trusted man in America") was on the air reporting that the President had been shot by right-wing extremists in Dallas. The media have no basis for judging the merits or proportions of an issue except a liberal Pavlovian response. One of the givens of their world is that a criminal who is a member of a minority group is always unjustly treated and excusable.

The media people, far from being the paragons of wisdom and fairness that they portray themselves, are of quite mediocre intelligence and dubious ethics. They are selected by the same criteria used to choose actors for toilet paper commercials. Politicians, as despicable as they are, eventually must answer to rivals, voters, and prosecutors. The television news celebrities can lie endlessly without any responsibility, except to the few unknown old plutocrats who employ them, a system of irresponsible monopoly we call freedom of the press.

My time on the police beat coincided with the arrival of the Warren Court's edicts expanding the rights of defendants. The impact was palpable —demoralization of the cops, debasement of trials into the dishonest pursuit of technicalities over justice, and increased crime on the streets. There was a cause-and-effect relationship as clear and demonstrable as anything in the social sphere can be. Suddenly the cops no longer had the discretion to carry out the most essential part of their job—stopping the criminals before their crimes.

Of course, there were and always had been police abuses, but they were not so widespread and major as to require the Supreme Court to tie the hands of the officers of the law. The restrictions were purely and simply the result of ideology and sentimentality—the feeling that crime could be cured by bribing and coddling the criminal. We now know beyond doubt what the fruits of that are, yet we are doomed to live with the institutionalized idiocy.

Surely the LAPD does not appear to best advantage in that tape, and where correction and punishment are called for, they should come—after careful proceeding and not in an atmosphere of political hysteria, and for discipline, not vengeance. But we should give the officers at least as much benefit of doubt and technicalities as federal judges and the ACLU bestow on the most heinous offenders. We do not know and can hardly imagine what those policemen may have gone through in the minutes—not to mention the hours, days, and months—before that videocam was pointed at them; nor what were all the experiences and dynamics that played into that incident.

The beleaguered policemen must subdue increasingly violent and numerous lawbreakers, protect the public and themselves, and be constitutional lawyers, all in the same instant. It is not too surprising that they will fall down on the job or even succumb to a little paranoia now and then, especially in the face of an uncomprehending and unappreciative public. All we asked of Schwarzkopf was to whip a greatly outnumbered enemy, with an unlimited purse and no real scrutiny. Thousands of policemen are asked every day to do things much more difficult.

We cannot let the politicians and mediacrats use a few instances of police excess to divert us from the real issue, as they would like. The real issue is an ever-escalating war against humanity by criminals who operate in America today on a scale and with a freedom unprecedented in human history. In the final analysis, we can survive well enough with a Rodney King roughed up now and then, though it ought to be discouraged. But what remains of Western civilization in this country cannot survive a half hour without officers of the law willing to risk life and limb on the front line of a war far more vital to our welfare than Mr. Bush's late glorious expedition amongst the Infidel. First things first.

—*Clyde Wilson*

AMERICAN IGNORANCE of European politics is as sublime as ever. All eyes switch back and forth (as in a tennis match) from the Middle East to Eastern Europe, and what goes on among the allies who gave us our civilization—France, Germany, Italy, Britain—remains a closed book. Of England we hear occasional tidings from her expatriate journalists, but even in this case the news is limited to the inner workings of the liberal Tories who fought under Mrs. Thatcher's banner.

Italy is the most extreme example: a country that everyone wants to visit and no one wants to read about. Last fall we informed our readers of the early progress made by the Italian autonomist movement spearheaded by the Lega Lombarda. Since then, virtually the only notice in the press has been David Dinkins' casual lumping of the Lega together with "national front" groups. The Lega Lombarda (and its umbrella organization the Lega Nord) is actually the opposite of most right-wing movements: its emphasis is regional and local, as opposed to national; it opposes all forms of imperialism; and so far from wanting to rebuild a fascist state that can make the trains run on time, the party's leader, Senator Umberto Bossi, wants to decentralize the Italian state and set up a federal constitution, on the Swiss model, with three republics.

The press had been predicting that the rapid ascent of the Lega would soon be stalled as voters got wind of its true objectives, and even up till the day before the local elections in November, the *Corriere della Sera* was publishing survey results that augered ill for Bossi and his party. Unfortunately, Bossi, who had been predicting victory, turned out to be a better prognosticator than the professionals. One town in Lombardia went 31.2 percent for the Lega, and in other communes the party's share went from around 11 to around 17 percent of the total. But even while eating crow the day after, journalists pointed to feuds within the Lega's ranks, and the pros are confident that the autonomist movement is a flash in the pan.

Nonetheless, the prominent weekly *Espresso*, back in September, devoted an entire section to Bossi's idea of three republics, and now you can't pick up a newspaper or magazine without seeing the senator's face or reading of some new outrageous statement. Giorgio Bocca, a prominent commentator for *Espresso*, has consistently been advising Italians to take Senator Bossi seriously, and in a January 6 column argued that 1991 would be the test. Italians are so fed up with corruption and organized crime that they will be willing to support the various leagues all over Italy. The main thing, Bocca

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warns, is that the Lega keep its hands clean and not attempt to join in any ruling coalition.

Time will tell. In the meantime, the talk goes on, all over Europe, of European unity, but the reality is the growth of regionalism and petty nationalisms, and a rising tide of what some people like to call nativism but I prefer to call self-respect. Are the United States sunk so low that we are incapable of forming regional "leagues" here?

—*Thomas Fleming*

POLITICAL CORRECTNESS has finally made its way from our universities to our junior high schools. Last March, in the northern Illinois town of DeKalb (population 32,000), 75 students of Huntley Middle School walked out of class, held a press conference, demanded the resignation of their principal, and called for the punishment of two classmates who had conducted a survey that supposedly demonstrated "racist" student attitudes toward blacks.

The girls' survey, which sought to determine whether the racial attitudes of their classmates differed according to gender, was a social science project that both their teacher and principal had approved, and the survey's reportedly "offensive" results were displayed at the school alongside other student projects. I say "reportedly" because the city school board has confiscated the poster on which the results were displayed and refused to release it to the public.

However, it was the survey itself and not the results that led to the demonstration. Huntley students not only held the girls responsible for the "offensive attitudes," but they even branded them "racists" for their participation in the project. Tim Lewis, the eighth-grader who led the student walk-out, told the press, "We don't feel that the students who walked out need counseling. We feel the girls who made the project need to be counseled and the two administrators at Huntley need to be counseled." He said of Del Brouwer, the school principal, "We have given him many chances to address us and each time he has addressed us he has gone in circles so we no longer want to speak to him."

Tim and his co-demonstrators couldn't have been more successful. Del Brouwer will step down as principal at the end of the school year and be reassigned as a teacher, and school officials and city school board members have privately determined the "proper punishment" for the two girls. Neither the school board nor the girls' parents would acknowledge the nature of the punishment.

Tim and his friends will even get the counseling they demanded. DeKalb's superintendent of schools, Bob Williams, immediately ordered "sensitivity training" for the school's staff and hired consultants to integrate multiculturalism into the curriculum. Not surprisingly, the paid consultants determined the situation at the school to be so dangerous and volatile that they recommended that their services not be postponed until the new school year.

Huntley's assistant principal, George Boyer, told the press that the students who walked out of class "should be commended and won't be punished." Why? Because "the students were learning. They were exercising the democratic process. The event was orderly. No one got hurt." This episode highlights "the harm that racial insensitivity can do," he concluded.

This episode was indeed a learning experience, but not in the way Mr. Boyer presumes. DeKalb's teachers and school administrators could have used this incident to teach their students that learning often means uncovering painful truths, and that for learning to occur our schools must remain open to inquiry and debate and not closed to sensitive and controversial subjects. They could have reminded their students that citizens in this country are innocent until proven guilty, and that the girls' project had been sanctioned by their teacher and principal and in no way proved any malice on their part.

But what did the students learn instead? They learned that rules mean very little, that adults and elected officials can be easily cowed, and that the mature way to get what you want in our society is not through merit, ability, or frank and free debate, but through coercion, pressure politics, and civil disobedience. Most offensive is the lesson Mr. Boyer taught the students, that any action — including cutting class and holding demonstrations — is acceptable as long as "no one gets hurt." Apparently Mr. Boyer doesn't consider the principal's lost reputation and position, or the trauma the two girls have suffered, as damage of any consequence.

The true tragedy of this case is not that opportunities were lost or that wrong lessons were learned. Rather, it is that DeKalb students will no longer freely ask questions without first wondering whether their inquiries are acceptable or unacceptable, "correct" or "incorrect," or important enough to run the risk of ostracism and punishment. We have long taught our children that the only dumb question is the one never asked. DeKalb's punishment of two innocent girls may have irreversibly paved the way for many years of silence.

—*Theodore Pappas*

DONALD SIEGEL, R.I.P. Few people, apart from film buffs, recognize the name Donald Siegel, but since the 1940's Mr. Siegel had directed some of the best American films ever made. Critics either hated or despised him both for pandering to popular tastes and for refusing to pander to the political prejudices of the intellectuals. The original *Invasion of the*

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Bodysnatchers (1956) was widely interpreted as a McCarthyist film, which it was, but it was also much more: a film horrifying enough to make sleep itself an object of terror, it warned us (like Eugène Ionesco's *Rhinocéros*) that already in the 1950's Americans were losing that individualism which was our primary virtue. All of Siegel's best heroes were men who accepted responsibility and did what they had to do in an America run by bureaucrats and zombies: Kevin McCarthy, holding onto his humanity and screaming "They're Coming," Clint Eastwood as Dirty Harry, sacrificing his career in order to protect the public, and John Wayne as the aging gunman John B. Book in *The Shootist* (1976), the last good Western and a film tribute to John Ford.

Almost a reprise of *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*, Siegel's last major film cast Wayne as a rugged and honorable Westerner dying of cancer and Jimmy Stewart as the doctor who treats him. Something has happened to the West since men like Book had roamed free, and it is now dominated by cowardly businessmen and unprincipled punks whose violence earns the admiration of young men with no better models to turn to. Book cleans up the town and dies honorably in one grand gesture that teaches a young Ron Howard how to be a man without being drawn into the cult of violence.

At the end of *Dirty Harry*, Eastwood throws away his badge, and at the end of *The Shootist* Ron Howard throws away his gun. Siegel was no pacifist, but he recognized in all his films that neither politics nor even law can solve the problems spawned by a corrupt and decadent society. Rumor has it that Siegel quit *Magnum Force* because Eastwood insisted on twisting the picture into a statement against police vigilantes. Under Siegel's tutelage, Eastwood became one of the most consistently interesting directors in Hollywood, but the real Dirty Harry — the man who would rather quit than compromise — was Don Siegel.

— Thomas Fleming

WARREN CHAPPELL, one of America's foremost illustrators and calligraphers, died last March 26 at his home in Charlottesville, Virginia, where he was for many years an artist-in-residence at the University of Virginia. He was eighty-six years old.

Warren Chappell

Mr. Chappell worked for such publishers as Random House, Harper & Row, Doubleday, and Little, Brown, and among the hundreds of books he illustrated were editions of *Tale of a Tub* (1930), *Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (1942), *Tom Jones* (1943), *Moby-Dick* (1976), and *All the King's Men* (1981). He collaborated with John Updike on a number of children's books, including *The Magic Flute* (1962), *The Ring* (1964), and *Bottom's Dream* (1969), and was the author of *The Anatomy of Lettering* (1935), *They Say Stories* (1960), *A Short History of the Printed Word* (1970), and *The Living Alphabet* (1975). He received the Goudy Award from the Rochester Institute of Technology in 1970 for his contributions to letter design, the most notable of which were his two original typefaces, Lydian and Trajanus.

It was The Rockford Institute's great good fortune to have Mr. Chappell as its first illustrator. His vignettes regularly appeared in our publications throughout the late 1970's and early 1980's, and as a tribute to him we have reproduced a number of these original works for this month's cover and articles. He had become a friend of Leopold Tyrmand, our first editor, when Mr. Tyrmand was working for the *New Yorker*, and even after Tyrmand's death, Mr. Chappell continued to send remarks on the magazine, both critical and complimentary. (He hated the *Chronicles* logo, for instance, but characteristically apologized for saying so.)

A letter from Warren Chappell was always a treasure, written in beautiful (well-nigh indescribable) calligraphy and illustrated with an ink or watercolor cartoon; they were closer to art than raw communication. Chappell had a Greek affection for beauty and form that he was never able to shake, and he imposed his sense of grace upon a publishing world that is impoverished by his loss.

Principalities & Powers

by Samuel Francis

Lamar Alexander is not what most people expect to emerge from the hills of Tennessee, but in the New World Order, the state that produced Sergeant York, Jack Daniels, the Grand Ole Opry, and the Great Dayton Monkey Trial retains about as much cultural singularity as an enterprise zone in Detroit. Indeed, that's pretty much what Mr. Alexander, now President Bush's education secretary, helped turn his state into.

It was he, as Tennessee's governor from 1979 to 1987, who struck the deals and baited the traps that lured Nissan and General Motors from the foreign climes of Japan and Michigan to the bucolic meadows of the Volunteer State. Mr. Alexander may have been born on a mountaintop in Tennessee, but he never kilt a bar when he was only three. He's a dressed-for-success Rockefeller Republican who marches to globalist music, and he sees nothing wrong and everything right with the home state of Allen Tate and Andrew Lytle being ingested into the maw of planet-spanning bureaucracies that promise Progress through Universal Affluence.

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But materialism is by no means the only tune Mr. Alexander likes to hum. One of his favorite stories relates how, soon after the hordes of Michiganders began to descend on the Tennessee backwaters, a union official told him that one of the main questions with which his serfs always quizzed him was, "Where can I get good schools for my children?" The learning that produced Tate and Lytle wasn't good enough for the progeny of Detroit, it seems, and Mr. Alexander furrowed his brow to help them out.

Soon the gubernatorial noggin split asunder with the Comprehensive Education Reform Act of 1984, which the Legislature promptly defeated by one vote. The next year, after intensive campaigning by Mr. Alexander, it passed, and today it serves as a model for other states in reforming their educational systems.

The plan allows for such useful ideas as merit pay for teachers, but its main utility is for business, a subject from which Mr. Alexander's mind never strays too far. His legislation emphasizes more adult education (for the retraining of workers), more computer instruction, more math, and more science for the budding Einsteins and Edisons in a state where teaching Darwinism used to be illegal. How, after all, can Japanese and Northeastern multinationals conscript a New World work force if they have to make do with yokels drilled only in the Book of Genesis, reading and writing, and reciting the Pledge of Allegiance?

Now Mr. Alexander has gone to Washington, from which perch he will preach his global gospel to the whole nation. This spring he and President Bush unbosomed themselves of yet another "comprehensive reform" for the country's schools. The plan strikes all the strings on the educational reformers' harps: merit pay, parental choice, national standards, and vouchers. But buried amidst the good ideas, bad ideas, and mere slogans, there's one part of the legislation now in Congress that ought to make parent and pupil alike reach for their spitwads.

The *New York Times* modestly described it as "a plan for schools to provide children with a range of social services," and the official name for it is the "New American Schools" program. Under the direction of the nonprofit New American Schools Development Corporation, headed by Alcoa's chief executive officer Paul O'Neill, the program will sponsor 535 "experimental" and "innovative" schools using new organizational structures, new technologies, and new teaching methods and linking formal education with "social services." It's likely that the mental loins from which the idea of the "New American Schools" sprang were those of Chester Finn, former aide to Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, former deputy to education czar Bill Bennett, and current professor at Vanderbilt University, which, by a curious non-coincidence, just happens to be in Tennessee.

The "more social services" idea is what Mr. Finn, affectionately known as "Checker," calls "total schooling," and last winter, before the Alexander plan hit the legislative calendar, the *Wall Street Journal*'s editorial page poked at it with genteel skepticism. "Some neoconservatives," wrote the *Journal*, "find so many youngsters bereft of a supportive home life that teachers often have little chance to instill knowledge in the hours a week they have with a child. The new thinking is that if an extended school facility could serve as the base for nurturing and oversight — not necessarily by official personnel but by community groups or even parents themselves — we could catch kids before they fall by the wayside."

The idea of "total schooling" is that "dysfunctional homes" don't provide the right kind of socialization — not just instruction, but the processes by which children are subjected to social discipline, from toilet training to sharing their toys to using language to responding to authority. Therefore, argue Checker and his supporters, the schools should do it for them.

The appeal of the idea is that some homes really are "dysfunctional" by anyone's standard. Some parents don't bother to buy shoes and clothing for their children, much less raise them to know how to get to school on time, shut up while others are talking, or accept personal responsibility for what they do or don't do. But "dysfunctional" is a slope down which whole societies may slip. Once institutionalized, Mr. Finn's idea that schools and social policy in general should provide the remedies for "dysfunctional" homes will become an invitation for the invasion of not-so-dysfunctional homes by educational and government authorities.

"Dysfunctional" will soon come to encompass parents who don't say the right things to their children about religion, race, sexuality, women, global warming, smoking, the hazards of not wearing seat belts, the welfare of laboratory rabbits, the oppression of lesbian Eskimo belly-dancers, and all the other evils inflicted on the universe by the middle-class white male hegemony. In short, whatever Mr. Finn's intentions, his "total schooling" is an introductory textbook for the totalitarian manipulation of the family.

In a paper delivered last year before the Center of the American Experiment in St. Paul, Mr. Finn expanded on his idea, affirming that "we need to promulgate — and then enforce — a *doctrine of accountability* for parents as well as for their children." "We cannot confine ourselves within the boundaries of what is conventionally thought reasonable for public employees to do," he entoned. "It is no coincidence that when a group of businesses opened a free private school in Chicago designed to be a model for effective education of disadvantaged children, one of the first decisions they and the new principal made was that teachers in this school will routinely make home visits." He also envisions that "we are going to have to be prepared more frequently to remove children from their homes and send them into other settings," where they can receive the level of affection Mr. Finn deems appropriate. It's one thing to take a child away from its parents because physical abuse endangers life and limb, but Mr. Finn wants the state to confiscate the kid just because he's not receiving enough emotional warmth.

Mr. Finn's ideas might seem better suited for Stalin's Moscow or George Orwell's 1984 than for a Republican's Washington, but the Vanderbilt professor is one of the country's chief spokesmen for neoconservative educational policy, and he and the Tennessee school czar are working closely together. Moreover, the marriage is not as strange as it might seem, since there is a long history among educational re-

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formers of trying to replace the informal authority of social and family institutions with the formal power of an educational and social-therapeutic bureaucracy. Historian Christopher Lasch, who for some years has been emerging from the leftist cocoon of his youth into the authentic conservatism of his maturity, notes the process in his 1979 classic, *The Culture of Narcissism*. "The factory system established in the 19th century," he wrote, "socialized production, but left other functions of the family intact. The socialization of production, however, proved to be the prelude to the socialization of reproduction itself—the assumption of childrearing functions by surrogate parents responsible not to the family but to the state, to private industry, or to their own codes of professional ethics."

The idea of surrogate parents in the form of non-family institutions was popularized by Progressivist reformers in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, but it had the full support of those in business and government who wanted and needed a docile and well-trained mass labor force, electorate, and consumer market.

Mr. Lasch quotes two leading educational reformers of the era, Abraham Flexner and Frank P. Bachmarr, as announcing in 1918 that "Social, political, and industrial changes have forced upon the school responsibilities formerly laid upon the home. Once the school had mainly to teach the elements of knowledge, now it is charged with the physical, mental, and social training of the child as well." Progressives deplored the wreckage that the "dysfunctional" homes of the day wreaked upon their children, but they also wept over what any home did.

"In the social republic," chirped the founder of social work, Ellen Richards, "the child as a future citizen is an asset of the state, not the property of its parents. Hence, its welfare is a direct concern of the state." Opponents of child labor, pioneers of child psychology, and most of all, the movement to create special courts and codes of law for dealing with juvenile offenders, writes Mr. Lasch, show "the connections between organized altruism, the new therapeutic conception of the state, and the appropriation of familial functions by outside agencies."

Warren Chappell

What "some neoconservatives" are now prescribing for education reform, therefore, is not so neo after all. Advocacy of the replacement or control of the home and family by external and formal organizations is common to the Progressivists as well as to Mr. Finn's conception of what schools should do, and both are in close alliance with corporate and managerial elites who stand to gain from the bureaucratic management of the processes of socialization.

But Mr. Finn is not the only neoconservative to warble over the displacement of the family and its social functions by bureaucratic disciplines. In the Summer 1989 issue of the Heritage Foundation's *Policy Review*, Ben Wildavsky, son of neoconservative political scientist Aaron Wildavsky, thrills to the virtues of McDonald's as a surrogate parent, a conscriptor of youth for "upward mobility," and a manager of the assimilation of autonomous parts of the American heartland into the managerial corporate-cultural system.

Reviewing the life history of a McDonald's employee, Marion Foran from Helena, Montana, young Mr. Wildavsky bubbles with glee at the woman's metamorphosis from an aspiring college student paying her own tuition to a "professor of hamburgers" at McDonald's "Hamburger University." The transformation wasn't easy. After learning how to make milk shakes for a year or so, she decided she wanted to be a manager, "so she moved to Las Vegas and started work as a manager trainee at a McDonald's in a poor section of town, a far cry from small-town Montana." Now, having been exposed to the pleasures and rewards of hamburgerological cosmopolitanism, Miss Foran teaches class in employee retention and "also instructs managers . . . in how to tame her old nemesis, the Taylor milk shake machine."

If the epic of Miss Foran's ascent from what young Mr. Wildavsky considers Montana's cow-paddy culture to following the star of her destiny in mastering the mysteries of milk shakes in Las Vegas were all that McDonald's did for (or to) its employees, the social consequences might be minor. But young Mr. Wildavsky has seen the future, and it has milk shakes for everybody. He swoons over what he was told by Yvonne Willis, a manager at Washington (D.C.) Gas. "Willis believes working at McDonald's can help people learn 'those skills we take for granted. You learn what it means to work, to get up in the morning, to be on time, to plan your day and plan your activities.'"

Another manager, Kim Whittington, told him she looks kindly on applicants with "fast-food experience." "They learn people skills, cash handling, getting people in and out quickly; they could even learn some management skills if they're training other people." In other words, McDonald's—and by extension, other bureaucracies—can do what families have failed to do or can't do, and the gratitude and loyalty inspired by bureaucratic disciplines and organizations displace what workers once felt for their families, their homes, and their communities, even in such wildernesses as "small-town Montana." Survivalists and the Posse Comitatus can stash away all the AK-47's they want to, but they don't have a chance against the Taylor milk shake machine.

Republics, such as the one Americans used to inhabit, don't work when teachers administer therapy for homes and multinational corporations replace families and communities. Republics work only when independent, self-supporting citizens know how to govern themselves, both personally and politically. If they don't know how to rule themselves morally through autonomous social institutions, they won't know how to rule themselves politically as free men, and the more they neglect the discipline that self-government teaches, the more slavish they will be to the kinds of bureaucratic empires over which Lamar Alexander, Ronald McDonald, and their praise-singers preside.

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The Broken Promise of American Life

by Thomas Fleming

The better future which Americans propose to build is nothing if not an idea which must in certain essential respects emancipate them from their past. American history contains much matter for pride and congratulation, and much matter for regret and humiliation. On the whole, it is a past of which the loyal American has no reason to feel ashamed, chiefly because it has throughout been made better than it was by the vision of a better future; and the American of today and tomorrow must remain true to that traditional vision. He must be prepared to sacrifice to that traditional vision even the traditional American ways of realizing it.

Already in 1909 the future founding editor of the *New Republic*, Herbert Croly, was telling Americans that to realize *The Promise of American Life* (the title of his book) they were going to have to sacrifice all that was distinctive in their way of life. What Croly actually knew of American life, it is hard to tell. His parents—an Irish immigrant father and an English feminist mother—were both journalists who spent their life in New York, which even then was a city that had lost its American accent.

Croly spends much of his book exploring American history to justify his "preferences . . . on the side of Hamilton" against Jefferson. On his interpretation, the United States was an organism gradually realizing its destiny by centralizing its political, social, and economic structures. "To be sure," he concedes, "any increase in centralized power and responsibility . . . is injurious to certain aspects of traditional American democracy. But the fault in that case lies with the democratic tradition; and the erroneous and misleading tradition must yield before the march of a constructive national democracy." He denigrates the views held by the defenders of "an individualist and provincial democracy" as "the inevitable attitude of the traditional Bourbon."

In foreign policy Croly pretended to praise the traditional American policy of isolationism. This policy could not, however, "persist in its present form," because America eventually had to take its place with Europe, China, and Japan "in a world system," and in the years to come no one beat the war drums more sanctimoniously than the editor of the *New Republic* and his loyal employee Walter Lippmann, although when war actually came Lippmann used all his influence to keep himself out of the conflict. For Croly and his editors, "the promise of American life" could only be fulfilled by tearing down the old America, based on individual liberty, free markets, local government, provincial culture, and isolationism, and replacing it with a new model democracy based on a collective sense of social responsibility, economic planning, centralized power, nationalized culture, and aggressive internationalism.

The political conflict between *New Republic* liberalism

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(represented by Wilson and both Roosevelts) and Middle American populists and progressives was one chapter in the ceaseless struggle between Jeffersonians and Hamiltonians for the body and soul of America. However, there is a deeper, almost mystical side to the conflict. My predecessor in this position used to say that there were two Americas, the one symbolized by Plymouth Rock, the other by Ellis Island, and those whose families had come by way of Ellis Island had to remember what they owed to the old stock that had made their good fortune possible. On one occasion I ventured to correct Leopold Tyrmand by saying that the old America was better typified by Jamestown than by Plymouth Rock. At the time, he thought that this was the half-serious joke of a Southern nationalist, something like the mock outrage of a Scot who protests against the statement "there will always be an England."

But there is more than regionalism to the symbolic conflict of the two settlements. If the Puritans came to found a city on a hill and drive the Devil from the wilderness, the settlers of Virginia (and Pennsylvania and New York) came for more practical reasons. They wanted cheap land, the opportunity to prosper by their own efforts. Politically, many of them wanted nothing more than to be left alone by government. Their republican ideal was neither the theocracy of the godly nor the democratic tyranny of the town meeting. They were willing to work hard and run great risks but found few attractions in cities where troops were quartered and where regulations told a man how often he might bathe and punished him for impudence to his spiritual superiors.

Jamestown gave America her first hero, Captain John Smith, a mercenary adventurer who ended our first experiment with the welfare state. The colony's backers in England had established a form of corporate communism that discouraged all individual initiative, and the settlers neglected their defenses and began to run out of supplies. Although he protected them from the Indians and turned them from starvation to plenty, the shirkers and aristocrats in the little colony hated Smith; they slandered him and almost succeeded in killing him, but despite their best efforts — and those of such later detractors as the last of the Puritans, Henry Adams, who devoted one of his first essays to debunking the captain — Smith remains an enduring symbol of the American frontiersman and takes his place ahead of Boone and Crockett as the first of the "lost boys" of the American frontier.

The settlement of Middle America could be told as a series of ethnic invasions. First came the backwoodsmen — mostly Celts from the Carolinas, Virginia, and Pennsylvania. They were looking for rich land but even more for abundant game. Even after the War Between the States, Pa Ingalls (Laura's father) kept his family on the move in search of good hunting. After the greatest risks had been run and the homesteads had been cleared, a quieter invasion of hard-working Yankees came in, bringing with them a sense of order that often succeeded in driving out the wild Celts. The early history of Illinois is a perpetual friction between the Connecticut Congregationalists of Rockford and Freeport and the downstate Kentuckians and Virginians. Elizah Farnham, a New York Quaker who traveled the state in the 1830's, never fails to record her disgust with the shiftless "suckers," and always repaid their hospitality with contempt.

In time, the two groups — ethnic first cousins, if not brothers — began to coalesce and find national political themes to divide and unite them along different lines. By one of the period's typical ironies, the Yankee Stephen Douglas champions the Southern-leaning Democrats and the Kentucky cracker Abe Lincoln becomes the hero of the Republican Party.

The tension between Virginia and Massachusetts defines the American character at its best. Their friendship — summed up in the persons of Adams and Jefferson — made both the Revolution and the Constitution. Their hostility created the first political parties and eventually undid the work of the Founders. It was during and after the great national suicide of 1860-65 that the new America of Ellis Island began to supersede both Plymouth Rock and Jamestown, and it is one of the myths that Americans live by that we have recovered from the massive immigration that was halted by the immigration reform of 1924.

Rockford, Illinois, shows the changes as well as any other town, and if I seem to pick on Rockford, it is only because I find myself living here. The earliest settler in the area, Stephen Mack, was a Vermonter who married a local Indian princess, and by 1840 what are now Winnebago and Boone Counties were home to prospering settlements of New England Congregationalists and Scottish Presbyterians (direct from Argyleshire). The first Swedes arrived in 1852 and two years later were able to establish a Swedish Lutheran church with 77 members. The Swedes continued to arrive after the war, and they were joined by Irish (some had already come with the railroad in the 1840's) and German immigrants and eventually by Italians. (The first Italian family arrived in 1878.)

A newcomer to Rockford is soon puzzled by the layout of streets and neighborhoods, as if the city were really a set of separate towns haphazardly joined together. Streets can change names several times in the course of two or three miles. (31st St. becomes Peters before turning into Fairview and then Chelsea.) The mystery begins to clear only when the newcomer becomes aware of the old ethnic neighborhood lines. In fact, the best symbol of Rockford is the hospital situation: the Swedes go to Swedish-American; the old families tend to go to Rockford Memorial; and the Catholics, predominantly Italian, go to St. Anthony.

All of this might be considered quaint, but unfortunately little is left of the old ethnic cultures. The local Swedish societies consist almost exclusively of old people, and apart from the ubiquitous pancakes, it is hard to find real Swedish cuisine on any menu. There are dozens of Italian places, all of them offering microwaved lasagna, pizza, and overcooked spaghetti with the same red sauce. Hardly anyone under 50 can speak more than a few words of Italian, but this is not to say that they have become fully Americanized. Many of the Italo-Americans I have talked to express resentment at the way they and their parents were treated in the old days. One successful man of 60, whose parents had come from the Veneto region, told me that, when he first went looking for work, Swedish employers routinely told him they had no jobs for a dago. They also told him to stay on his side of town.

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Forty years later, the man is still resentful — not so much for the obstacles put in the way of his success, since he has in fact succeeded. What he resents most is the shame he was made to feel for being Italian. In their desire to make him a good American, his parents told him very little about the old country, and it was only when he made a sentimental journey back to Italy that he realized that he came from the richest cultural tradition on the face of the earth: in literature, music, painting, architecture, America had never produced and will never produce anything comparable. How could a man go through life without knowing this? The answer is simple: he had an American education. Since the 20's our schools have been too busy teaching citizenship and vocational skills to have any time for history, much less painting.

Assimilation has worked, we are told, and by ceasing to be Irish or Italian or Czech, the immigrants and their children have either become American or have created a new culture for 'the first universal nation.'

The Italian experience is not much different from that of the Greeks, Poles, and the Irish who formed ethnic enclaves in Rockford. Even the Swedes were originally looked down upon as "dumb Swede" peasants, whose daughters might do as clumsy servant girls, but God forbid if the son of the family developed too much of an interest. The Germans may have the most to complain of. Despite their large numbers, they are virtually ignored in the local histories I have looked at. Most of this oblivion is due to the anti-German propaganda of the two World Wars, when a campaign was waged against the teaching of German even in the private schools of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod. In Rockford there used to be a Berlin Avenue in the same neighborhood with Paris, Rome, and London, but the name was changed during a wave of anti-German hysteria.

Eventually, however, the Germans and the Swedes intermarried with the Yankees and joined the Northern European power structure. In this generation even Italian-Swedish matches have become common. Does this mean, as Richard Alba argues, that a new pan-European identity is emerging? No. What seems to happen is that either one or the other heritage dominates or else the family loses any sense of ethnic identity. All that is left is white skin, which distinguishes them from Latinos and blacks. I wonder if part of the growing racism in America is not due to the deracination of the old ethnic stocks.

The low-level ethnic tensions surface in a number of ways in Rockford. People here are generally kind and pleasant, like most Midwesterners. As drivers, however, they are incredibly rude (as well as incompetent), and they will impatiently tailgate a car with its turn-signal on as if to say, "Who the hell are you to be in my way?" In supermarkets, they wander through the aisles, completely reckless of anyone else's existence or safety. When they are not running you over, they are staring at you with a directness that strangers find uncomfortable. A visiting friend from the South, after experiencing two stores in one day, observed that in South Carolina a man who acted like a Rockfordian would be punched out in five minutes.

This contrast is obviously exaggerated, and there is a relaxed Midwestern set of good manners that gives many older Rockfordians a pleasantly youthful air; unfortunately, this air has not been handed down to the current generation, and the well-bred Midwesterner is generally over 60.

What explains the difference in manners noted by my friend? South Carolinians are not actually nicer than Rockfordians. Despite their good manners, Southerners are a good deal more dangerous than Midwesterners. I think the main difference is that while South Carolinians live by an inherited code of manners, the peoples who settled Rockford arrived with quite different, often conflicting codes, and while most of them have lost their old manners, they have neither adopted the manners of the old Yankees nor created a new common code.

The failure was not inevitable. Charleston has its share of Germans, Italians, and Irish, but they all act and speak like Charlestonians. I think there are two reasons for this success. First, the immigrants came in at a slow enough rate to be absorbed, and second, they were entering a powerful culture capable of transforming anyone — Yankee or European — into a Southerner. But the transforming capacity of Charleston or New Orleans needs to be explained in a century when local attachments have been steadily loosened by the fingers of national government and national culture.

Part of the answer is to be found in 1861, when the hotheads in Charleston did their best to start the War Between the States. South Carolina has always acted as if it were a sovereign state and Charleston — "the holy city" — as if it were Rome, or at least Constantinople. A college friend once told me that he had spent his *Wanderjahr* in Europe and after seeing London, Paris, and Rome he had concluded that those cities were all right in their own way, but there was no place like Charleston.

That is the attitude which all small town Americans used to take. Sinclair Lewis mocks George Babbitt's devotion to Zenith City, but as long as the citizens still loved Duluth, it had a chance of living up to Babbitt's boosterism. Considering the real and substantial advantages offered by Rockford, I am always surprised by the lack of civic pride. Rockford is actually a pleasant place to live, with tree-lined neighborhoods that might be the setting for a *Father Knows Best* episode. But in talking to the natives, I hear mostly about poor schools, bad weather, and the lack of opportunities. Rockford is always near the bottom of the Places Rated surveys, and this announcement usually brings forth a tepid defense of the city amid resentful criticisms of the survey. No one gets really angry; they accept it as a matter of course that whatever it is that makes a place attractive, Rockford just doesn't have it. Enough Rockfordians have moved to Scottsdale to hold a Rockford picnic, and there are similar enclaves in Florida. Good Rockfordians all go to the Sunbelt when they die, as Oscar Wilde might have said, and some of them try to anticipate death by a decade or two.

Recently, a prominent local politician returning from a tour of the "Sunbelt states" conceded that, oh sure,

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Rockford doesn't have either mountains or the seashore, and it has nothing like the history and charm of Charleston, but it's still "a pretty good place to live," and if some people complain of the lack of restaurants and entertainment, all they have to do is drive to Chicago or Milwaukee.

A pretty good place to live. I thought immediately of Ralph's Pretty Good Grocery: if Ralph doesn't have it, you probably don't need it anyway. No, Rockford does not have the beauty or sense of history you find in Charleston or even San Antonio, but that is not because of its youth. Photographs taken at the turn of the century disclose a town of considerable charm. In the middle sat Sinnissippi Park, the nearest thing to a formal garden in this part of the country. The park and gardens are still here, but they are cut through by an ugly and entirely unnecessary freeway.

Today, there is literally no downtown Rockford, only an abandoned city center increasingly occupied by the library, arts center, the nonprofit theater (one of the town's great cultural assets) and public offices. Most of the old buildings have been torn down, and a few years ago preservationists were unable to rescue two old limestone buildings that had been typical of old Rockford.

In a recent *American Scholar* article ("Back to Batavia") Bill Kauffman puts his finger on the problem. In his hometown the local Catholic hospital wanted to buy and tear down one of the last downtown mansions (built in 1811) and replace it with a highrise apartment building for rich old people. The two old-fashioned Batavians on the planning board voted no; the three from more recent immigrant stock voted yes.

In a series of essays and books, co-written with James Q. Wilson, Edward Banfield developed the notion of "other-regardingness," a willingness to work for the common good, as a characteristic American virtue, one to which European Jews rapidly assimilated, but one that it has taken other European immigrants much longer to acquire. Much of the American social and political system, especially the best qualities of American democracy, grow out of this "other-regardingness" that characterized the Pilgrim fathers and the self-reliant individualism of John Smith. Without the one there would be no concern for the welfare of poor immigrant groups, and without the other we shall soon lack the abundant wealth that made our generosity possible.

I have more than once tried to explain all this to Ben Wattenberg and other advocates of increased immigration. They aren't stupid or even particularly cynical, but I cannot make any headway for a simple reason. The America I know (and remember) is a place where they have never lived. In the course of their lives most of them have gradually transcended their families' ethnic enclaves and become citizens of the great North American cosmopolis. My America is something they may have read about in books; they may even mourn its passing; but they do not believe it survives except in a few degenerate pockets of Appalachia characterized by incest and pellagra.

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But where is this new national culture that sets a pattern for the world? Is it on MTV or in the "songs" of MC Hammer and Public Enemy? Perhaps it is the films of David Lynch. Or better still, the commercials for fast-food chains, blue jeans, and poorly made automobiles. We may not be able to quote from Daniel Webster's Bunker Hill address or get an allusion to *Macbeth*, but we all "deserve a break today" or want to know where the beef is. Some of us drive today's Chevrolet on the way to the Magic Kingdom, where we can see genuine replicas of European villages. No wonder the new immigrants despise us and refuse to give up their languages and cultures.

The Big Lie of modern American life is that the assimilation process worked. It didn't. The great postwar promise of American life was a new way of life in the suburbs, where the Hamiltonian man of business could return from a hard day in the city and pursue the life of a Jeffersonian yeoman in his off hours. Booth Tarkington ends his great novel trilogy *Growth* with the construction of a suburb where the immigrant laborers could escape the smoke and shed their ethnic heritages. A generation later Frank Capra held out the same promise for Bailey Park in *It's a Wonderful Life*, and after World War II the designers of Levittown and other new cities claimed to be creating a new and more democratic culture that transcended the old limitations of class and tribe. That didn't work either: the suburbs proved to be sterile non-communities where abandoned and resentful housewives slowly turned into angry feminists.

What sort of community can be created without the ties of blood, history, and faith to bind it together? All the block parties and Scout Troops and Little Leagues in the world could not disguise the fact that the suburbs were little more than refuges for women and children. They had neither past nor future and offered the worst features of town and country: a dense population without the variety and sights of the city; the boredom of the countryside without either the wildlife or the hard work that gives a savor to rural life. The new life was as hollow as the editorial blusterings of the *New Republic*: the suburban "homesteaders" traded in the real America of Cincinnati and Indianapolis, of farms and villages, for the promise of a New America that could never be realized.

What the suburbs, especially restricted communities, now represent is an escape from the ethnic terrorism of the cities. The rich have withdrawn into their private islands and padlocked paradises, and the rest of us have achieved the minor success of learning how to live with each other in suburban civility, but even that civility will give way before the continuous invasion of aliens seeking to fulfill the promise of American life.

Immigration per se has not been the major obstacle to America realizing her nationhood, but the pressure of immigration made it impossible to deal with the real problem, which has been and continues to be the centralization of political, economic, and cultural power. At this point in our national history, there are only two ways to escape the moral and political paralysis that afflicts communities across the country. The most obvious solution is the quasi-fascist measures promoted by liberals, neoconservatives, and the Bush administration: create a national culture out of an odd

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lot of great books and the national curriculum that William Bennett was designing during his tenure as secretary of Education. Institute a new program of National Service along the lines recommended by William Buckley. Give these kids uniforms and empower them, as Paul Weyrich suggests, to clean up the slums and harass drug dealers and other undesirables. Engage in a series of pointless foreign wars to rebuild pride in the nation and distract the voters from the unpleasant facts of contemporary American life: an economy in decline, a crumbling infrastructure, ethnic strife, and a growing "public sector" that will soon deprive citizens of even the shadow of civil rights they think they possess. If you remember the World War II propaganda films in which a platoon is forged out of a Southern redneck, a northeastern patrician, an Italian, and a Jew who all learn to respect each other in their fight against fascism, then you have the general idea. If these measures didn't work for Mussolini, that is only because the Italians are not worthy of empire.

Unfortunately, we apparently are no more worthy than the Italians. What was the New Deal, if not an experiment in National Socialism? Roosevelt did not unify the nation by attacking Jews, because the Germans and the Japanese were convenient to his purposes. Roosevelt the Second did not even begin the process. That honor goes to Woodrow Wilson and even to Roosevelt the First. All three had swallowed Herbert Croly's vision of a new America and were eager to trade in the old historical republic for a new model. It was the New Deal and its monstrous children that sapped all the authority from local communities and tried to unify the country around the ideology of democracy militant.

If another round of Neonational Socialism is not to your taste, then you might consider my plan: decentralization of the government structure to the point that Italian and Swedish neighborhoods in Rockford can be free either to preserve their ethnic heritage or to amalgamate into a new Rockford identity. Before there can be an America, there must first be a Rockford and an Illinois that are real, organic communities as opposed to artificial administrative units carrying out the will of the Washington government. The citizen populations of Athens or Florence were hardly greater than Rockford's, but both created great civilizations that enriched neighboring states who in turn enriched them. They were great because they believed in themselves and pitied the rest of the world. Rockford needs to burn the Places Rated studies in the public square, to thumb its nose at Chicago and New York, and despise the weaklings who move to the Sunbelt. Like Chesterton's Notting Hill, the Rockfords of America need to learn that the only honorable form of imperialism is local.

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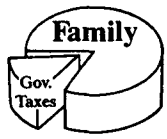

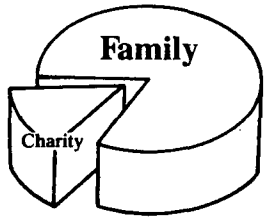

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Fanlight

by Robert B. Shaw

A half-wheel glazed above the door:
six wooden spokes in shadow cast
increase their reach along the floor,
touching the hall's far end at last.

Deprived of full rotundity
and axle, too, on which to spin,
what else but solar energy
would fuel its daily journeys in?

Between these radiating lines
the pie-cut shapes of radiance fall.
Poured from the threshold, such designs
dazzle to shame the modest hall,

and set us squinting when our own
way in or out must cross their tracks.
Leaving the tiny torrid zone,
we feel its brand upon our backs.

You ask what all this adumbrates?
Some doors are slow to open wide.
Be hopeful; say "illuminates."
More of the same light waits outside.

Drawings by Warren Chappell

Serving the Purpose

You know those shims you make by folding paper
over and over in a tightening square?
You jam one under a china cupboard's foot
to stop it rattling every time you pass.
It does the job, and you forget it's there.

But now, with the gigantic van
hugging the curb out front, premises
emptying systematically room by room,
standing in a corner out of the way
of burdened, grunting, shunting men you hired,
suddenly you see it, off duty and forlorn,
lying as if pasted to a floorboard.
To pick it up would just anticipate
the final sweep it waits for, harshly dinted
by its day in, day out stint of holding
steady the shelves of breakable, gilt-rimmed stuff
brought out only to gratify the in-laws.
Now with that load pampered into barrels
(excelsior!—the motto for all movers),
you peer along the bare floor and gauge the slant of it.
All those years the old beams went on settling.
And you, haven't you learned to settle for less?

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Warren Chappell

Promises to Keep

by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

The modern temper shows a fatal tendency to break large moral and historical questions into smaller technocratic ones and to tinker with each of these as a separated "policy problem." Unfortunately for advocates of this approach, the immigration debate presents us with what is essentially a moral problem, requiring the use of the moral—even of the prophetic—imagination to put the parts together and, viewing them whole, to recognize that the subject is part of another whole that is larger still.

Many of the proponents of continuing immigration into the United States at current or increased levels insist that immigrants are good for our economy, since their numbers help to make up for a declining birthrate among the native population and because the more highly educated of them bring skills that are no longer being developed in sufficient quantity in this country. This is the kind of talk that got the Morrison bill passed by Congress last year—insofar, that is, as talk and ideas had anything to do with its passage at all. (Ben Wattenberg actually suggested that federal taxes paid by would-be immigrants could by themselves liquidate the federal deficit!) Advocates of liberal immigration policies remind us that we are "a nation of immigrants" and that it is therefore un-American—by which they mean "immoral"—to cut off, or even drastically to reduce, the flow of foreigners to this country. We are, and have been for two centuries, they say, the opportunity and hope of the world, and so we should deny ourselves to nobody. (Hollywood is, and has been for decades, full of beautiful women who have thought the same way.) Five billion people, they imply, have a natural and God-given right to share in the benefits of American citizenship (even if, having moved here, they decide not to avail themselves of it): "California or bust!" is an old slogan with new life in it. Not just millions but billions of people can reside comfortably with us, Julian Simon insists. And, since we are already a nation of well-assimilated strangers (we all wear Reebok shoes, eat at Burger King, and listen to Bon Jovi on Sony Walkmans) we obviously can assimilate the entire world, if need be. We have become *Homo economicus* and all of us, including the rawest newcomers to these shores, understand the morality, as well as the practical desirability, of playing the game on a level table. Finally, the pro-immigrationists say, we are living today in what George Bush (who stated that he looked forward "eagerly" to signing the Morrison legislation into law) calls the New World Order, which I imagine as a kind

Chilton Williamson, Jr. is senior editor for books at Chronicles, *whose most recent novel is* The Homestead.

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of universal extension of Columbia University's International House on Morningside Heights in New York City.

One reason to distrust these arguments is that they are usually formulated and delivered by a variety of special-interest groups—the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, truck gardeners and fruit growers in California and Florida, refugee welfare associations, ethnic organizations, human rights activists, and every sodality of professional ideologue—that have no interest in the larger reality lying behind their own narrow and parochial concerns. The more important reason, though, is that even if correct they are incidental to the much larger and more critical concerns raised by our existing immigration policies. Having read at least a portion of the pertinent material, I am, for example, persuaded by my opinion (as St. Paul said) that immigrants *do* take jobs from native-born Americans; that a great many of them do *not* pay taxes or anyway their fair share of them; and that—particularly in cities like Los Angeles—they are a tremendous tax burden on the already oversubscribed natives. The work of Donald Huddle, professor of economics at Rice University, seems to me to substantiate conclusively these statements.

Nevertheless, if Professor Huddle's findings were discredited tomorrow, and the writings of Julian Simon bathed simultaneously in a bright transforming light, I would, while conceding a point, remain opposed to a liberal American immigration policy on the grounds that all economic arguments are extraneous to the larger questions. You could "prove" to me that, without the immediate transference of the entire population of Hong Kong to the state of California, the United States would be in a major economic depression by the middle of next year, and I would still be against transferring it there. Or you could "prove" to me that yes, the United States *can* support comfortably all of the earth's five-billion-plus people, and my response would be a) what does "comfortably" mean? and b) who wants to live with five billion people where formerly there were a quarter billion? If we really do require all these immigrants from many lands to goose our economy and to strengthen our anemic blood with their robust red corpuscles, their breeding habits that are better suited to laboratory mice than to human beings, and their rejuvenating cultural "diversity," then indeed it is later than I think. When we arrive at the point where the United States must rely upon massive transfusions of human as well as of financial capital from abroad to restore us to what we were in 1789—an energetic, canny, thrifty, resourceful, interesting, brave, and above all confident civilization—then quite frankly there no longer *is* a United States of America in any save the legalistic sense, and I for one don't give a hang what becomes of the formalist (though alas not empty) shell that remains.

We ought, I propose, to forget about economic considerations and the economy (which seems to get along on its own anyhow) when we think about immigration, and divert our attention instead to what Herbert Croly called "the promise of American life" and that today is known in more general terms as "the quality of life," even if all too few people who use the phrase have any fair idea of what it is they are talking about. Although Bill McKibben assures us that mankind has arrived at the point where it must choose the "humble" path over the "defiant" one in making its future way through the natural world, contemporary environmental argument is for the most part restricted to gaudy and generalized crises like the greenhouse effect and the global population explosion. The fragmentization of contemporary "thought" causes such mega-subjects to be detached from more restrictive and subordinate topics and problems, set apart from them and elevated into towering abstractions that become the objects of a peculiar sort of counter-idolatry. As a result, a variety of "opinion-makers" in the United States today are running around yelling their heads off that the sky is going to fall tomorrow because the population of China reached one billion yesterday, while hardly one of them (with a few brave exceptions like Georgie Anne Geyer) dares—or perhaps even thinks—to say that the American land is going to be overrun and despoiled in fifty or a hundred years because of the folly, greed, and dishonesty with which Congress has responded to the immigrant invasion during the past twenty-five years.

It is considered "humanitarian" to fret about population growth and its effects on the natural environment at the global (which is to say, at the abstract) level; but "racist," "xenophobic," "uncompassionate," and "un-American" to worry about the population crisis as it immediately affects the United States, the only place in the world where we are in a position to be able to do anything about it. A few years ago, the late Edward Abbey agreed to write an article on the subject of immigration, legal and otherwise, for the *New York Times*' op-ed page, at the invitation of its editor. The editor held the piece for two months before requesting that the author, who had written to specification, reduce it by about 50 percent. This Abbey proceeded to do. Another month passed before a different editor wrote to say that the article could not be printed owing to a lack of space. The *Times* never paid Abbey a kill fee or even bothered to return the manuscript to him; later he published it as "Immigration and Liberal Taboos" in a collection of his essays. One of its sentences asks: "How many of us, truthfully, would *prefer* to be submerged in the Caribbean-Latin version of civilization?" The *Times* editors weren't telling, but stories about the hazards of nuclear-waste disposal, the horrors of air pollution and strip-mined hills, and the destruction of the Brazilian rain forests continued to make it into the Sunday editions of the paper, as did reports of famine in Chad and Ethiopia and almost monthly head counts of the population of China.

The few "conservative" writers (I suppose we *are* conservatives; it's getting hard to distinguish between the players these days) who outspokenly oppose substantial immigration into the United States have long known better than to play the environmental card when making their bid to their fellow "conservatives," all too many of whom equate conservatism with unrestrained capitalism, although five or six centuries of industrial capitalism have probably done more to destroy traditional and humane ways of life than a century and a half of militant Marxist-Leninism. On this subject, however, the time has arrived for plain speaking: the environmentalist argument, plus the cultural one, provides the essential overriding case against the waves of immigrants

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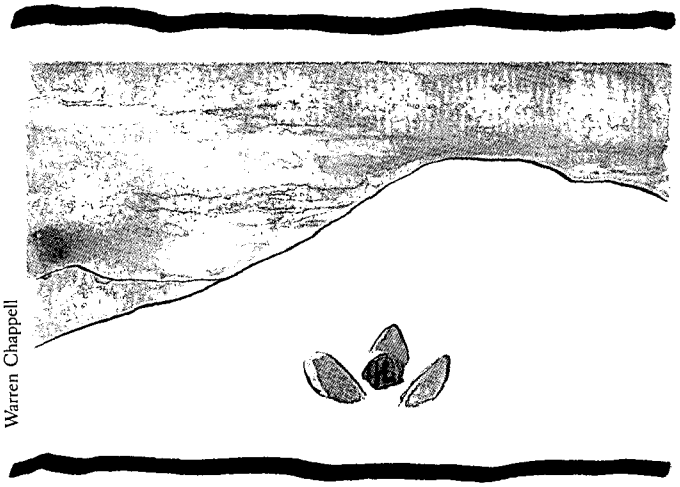
now cresting along the borders of the continental United States. Contrary to "conservative" opinion, America is *not* "underpopulated" (whatever that might mean). Advocates of immigration at present or elevated levels repeat *ad nauseam* that immigration is "an American tradition." Well, so are spacious skies, amber waves of grain, wide-open spaces, the open range, and the wilderness of mountain, desert, and plain. Can anyone really imagine America without them? (Pause for reflection.) Can anyone really imagine America without another thirty million Mexicans, six million more Iranians, ten million additional people from the Caribbean, and three or four million future refugees from the Soviet Union? (I thought so.) As for the environmentalists themselves, they need a little—much more than a little—of Abbey's courage and forthrightness if they are going to hold their own and argue their cause successfully in the New America of diversity and multiculturalism that is surely coming if the government in Washington does not catch up in a hurry with the opinion of a public that is already resentful—and has been for years—of the huddled masses arriving daily in this country. Does anyone believe for one minute that a United States in which European-Americans are a minority and Third World peoples a plurality will leave in place, let alone add to, the rather vast body of statutory law relating to environmental protection? The most polluted region of the United States lies along the 2,700-mile border it shares with Mexico. And Mexico itself, where everything from tamale-wrappers to heavy industrial equipment, when finished with, is dispensed directly, immediately, and thoughtlessly into "the environment" so beloved of American preservationists, is incomparably worse. (The train lines and highways I have traveled in Mexico are *cordona pas-sanitaires* of garbage, detritus, and junk.)



Warren Chappell

Another form of environmental degradation produced by soaring population growth is likely to be a precipitous decline in traditional, accepted, and even cherished standards of social and political life in America. It is astounding that the same "conservatives" who are always yapping about the need for deregulation, freedom of enterprise and of action, "personal freedom," "property rights," the tyranny of laws, "over-regulation," and so on and so forth, have failed to make a connection between the tendencies they deplore and the increasing density and size of the U.S. population. The state of Wyoming, of which I am a proud and thankful resident, though comprising 97,203 square miles, is home to only about 450,000 people, which makes it the least populous of all of the 50 states. It has, even by Western standards, generous laws and provisions regarding the taking of game animals of all sizes and of fish, cheap licenses, ready access to those enormous tracts of federally owned land that "conservatives" are always griping about, and so much *space* that, even at this late date, you can hunt all day without coming across another hunter. Of course, Wyoming's small population and the liberality of the laws—*all* of its laws!—are not coincidentally related. Take by comparison California, the most populous state in the nation, whose 28 million residents are cobwebbed with regulations stipulating such matters as what kind of car they may drive and what type of engine propels it, how much water they may put on their lawns, and whether they may burn a steak over charcoal in their backyards. In the modern age, big populations mean big regulation, and big regulation means big government, increasingly centralized to the exclusion of subsidiary powers and authorities and the jurisdiction of community government. In addition to which, you have to drive at twelve miles an hour, bumper to bumper, in eight-lane traffic for four hours a day, spend your lunch hour in line at the bank, put up with snippy, arrogant, and often illiterate bureaucrats, and write account numbers the length of a Ford serial number at the bottom of your checks. O Brave New World—O New World Order!

I will not write that the threat to the environment posed by massive immigration from predominantly Third World countries pales by comparison to the threat to historical American culture, since the two strike me as being about equal in importance. Here again, the obviating oracles of optimism point to what they describe as a long "tradition" of "assimilation" in America by which people-from-many-lands have been acculturated to the wisdom, habits, and tastes of Jefferson, Emerson, Lincoln, and Madonna. This is a heartwarming reading of American history, but like so many heartwarming things it is essentially a false one. Until after the Civil War, the United States was a country composed chiefly of North European peoples having a great deal more in common than they had differences between them. It is only in the latter part of our history that "multiculturalism" has either been important or has been seen to be important, and now positively beneficial, to the point of making a fetish of it. Assimilation, it should pain me to say, is *not* our tradition; rather homogeneity is, dissension having sprung along regional and geographic lines of demarcation.

If European-America were presently a strong and healthy culture, willing to tolerate a liberal immigration policy and to welcome people of non-European stocks and cultures in a spirit of confident generosity and manly self-esteem, there would be something genuinely heroic (though still wrongheaded) in its determination to do so. In fact, we are no longer a young, powerful, restless, and inexhaustibly optimistic society capable of surmounting great difficulties and eager to accept all challenges, in particular idealistic ones. Today we are a very different country from what we were in the 19th and early 20th centuries: middle-aged at

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least, perhaps prematurely old. We are no longer restless, we are bored and tentative; we are not optimistic but increasingly (and with good reason) the opposite; we have lost confidence in our heritage, our traditions, and above all perhaps our faith. This does not mean that we will necessarily adopt other traditions and other faiths; it does mean that we will have less and less of ourselves to offer peoples whom we would assimilate to the remnant of an indigenous culture. We know this. And so do the people who have recently appeared among us.

The stranger is within the gates, and he smells blood. I do not mean that he is bloodthirsty; he simply senses our weakness and is ready to exploit it as far as he can. He is taking advantage of us, and we cannot claim that we have not left ourselves open to, and even encouraged, him. "Multiculturalism" is a sign, maybe a proof, of this. As Lawrence Auster has written in a recently published book (*The Path to National Suicide: An Essay on Immigration and Multiculturalism*), the multiculturalist standard is the direct result of the Immigration Reform Act of 1965 which, by removing the national quotas provision of earlier immigration legislation, cleared the way for great numbers of immigrants from Asia, Africa, Latin America, and other non-European regions of the world. It is also notice served—by these immigrants and by others on their behalf—that "assimilation" is henceforth an outmoded concept, ethnocentric at best and racist at worst, and that this and future generations of newcomers will have no part in it, or of that Western civilization that is also under attack. And who, after all, is going to tell them differently? As the new immigrants arrive in their numbers in America, they will not only prove in plain fact unassimilable, they will be able, by the exercise of the suffrage, to alter American society to the extent that they will not need to assimilate to it; perhaps there will be nothing left of the original to assimilate to. Already this is seen to be the strategy of the leading Hispanic "rights" organizations, while there has been talk in the Mexican-American community for at least two decades of using their numbers and the vote to effect the secession of several of the southwestern states, which would either be incorporated by Mexico or form the new Nation of Aztlán. We have already experienced one episode of secession in our history; stranger things have occurred than that it should happen again. Just look at Canada.

There are further dangers inherent in multiculturalism beyond the foreseeable submergence of European-American culture and governance in the United States. The situation that is likely to evolve is not so simple a one as Us versus Them, White versus Brown, European versus Non-European. Jesse Jackson to the contrary, there will be no Rainbow Coalition—or if there is, it will be of very limited duration. Underlying the cant, the yes-saying, the cultural politics, and the silly celebrations of unity, profound resentments and antagonisms exist in multiethnic America that will surely grow stronger and deeper with time—and with continuing immigration from every part of the world. Nearly forty years after desegregation and a quarter-century after the civil rights legislation of the 1960's, relations between whites and blacks in this country are arguably worse than they have been at any time in our history. It is an open secret that blacks (collectively) despise Hispanics (again collectively) and vice versa, and that both groups are resentful and suspicious of Asians, who seem happy to return the compliment. Georgie Anne Geyer, the newspaper columnist, invites her readers to witness the disintegration of the Soviet Union and to learn from it: the day of what she euphemistically terms the "socially complicated state" is over, she warns, or at least the writing is on the wall. Events throughout the world today have one great thing to tell us: namely, that everywhere blood is thicker than water. Modern nations that not only refuse to recognize this truth but deliberately fly in the face of it will do so at their peril.

Advocates of immigration repeat *ad nauseam* that immigration is 'an American tradition.' Well, so are spacious skies, amber waves of grain, wide-open spaces, the open range, and the wilderness of mountain, desert, and plain.

In the light of America's immigration problem, James Burnham's "suicide of the West" takes on a newer meaning. From the time when the Puritans landed in Massachusetts, Americans have tended to think of themselves as members of a church whose reality has a secular dimension beyond the religious one. As the religious sensibility has waned in American society, the assurance of a quasi-religious mission has increased to the point where the United States at the end of the 20th century seems to regard itself as a collective Christ figure, redeeming the world by example and by purity of intention. But if we do succeed in crucifying ourselves, after our crucifixion we shall not rise again, and there will be no inheritors and apostles of our peculiar faith. The Third World—its cultures, its peoples—will remain emphatically in place, but we ourselves will have perished forever, having accomplished by our suicide no good for anyone save a relative handful of the world's refugees—and even those only in the short run.

Because we will have killed the goose that laid the golden eggs. The Third World *is* its people, not its sinister, corrupt, greedy, and incompetent governments; where the people are, there the Third World is, and will be. We have no magic alchemical atmosphere capable of imbuing Third World peoples with the ability to maintain the First World culture that created and continues to create the economic and technical fruits for which they hunger. In the collapse of European-America, nobody will be a winner except for the chronically and pathologically resentful (from our own ranks as well as from those of our supplanters), and even theirs will be a Pyrrhic victory. Then America will correspond, at last and in reality, with the description falsely applied to it in the 1960's by Professor John Kenneth Galbraith of Harvard University, when he wrote that the United States was a land of private affluence surrounded by public squalor. It will, in other words, truly have become another Third World country. ◈

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The Impact of Immigration on Hispanic-Americans

by Richard Estrada

Warren Chappell

As American migrant workers took to the fields in the first harvest season after the passage of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (the sweeping new federal law to control illegal immigration), Herminio Muñoz, a sixty-five-year-old Mexican-American from Progreso, Texas, told the *Dallas Times Herald*: "We think there is going to be a lot more work for us this year because of the law. In the past many of the farmers paid less because they could get all the workers they wanted. We have to believe the law is good."

Given that Hispanic-Americans have in recent years been portrayed as favoring more immigration, not less, was the opinion expressed by Mr. Muñoz an anomaly, or perhaps only the opinion of a small segment of the citizen work force? Or was it in fact more representative of Hispanic-American attitudes than is generally believed? If so, are there other misconceptions about Hispanic-Americans and the immigration issue, and what accounts for them?

The fact of the matter is that nearly every poll ever conducted of Hispanic public opinion (as opposed to the attitudes of Hispanic leaders) has found that Hispanics in the United States favor controls on immigration. Whether one consults the 1983 poll conducted by V. Lance Tarrance and Peter D. Hart (considered to be "Republican" and "Democratic" pollsters, respectively), or the Spanish International Network exit poll of Hispanics in the 1984 Texas Democratic Primary, or the June 1990 Roper poll, or various others, it is clear that the majority of Hispanics do not favor higher levels of immigration.

As is often observed, there is hardly an issue today over which Congress is more ambivalent than whether to limit or expand immigration. For example, in addition to the linchpin of the 1986 law, employer sanctions, which made it illegal for an employer to knowingly hire an illegal alien (thereby putting in place a mechanism with the potential for removing the principal attraction of illegal immigration), the Immigration Reform and Control Act also featured an amnesty provision, by which more than three million illegal aliens were eventually legalized (thereby feeding hopes that the breaking of U.S. immigration law might be officially forgiven yet again in the future). In 1990 Congress followed up on its decision to limit illegal immigration by significantly raising the levels of legal immigration.

Though their voices have not always been heard, certainly no ethnic group has been more visible in this policy debate than Hispanics, of whom at least 22.4 million now reside in the United States. Hispanics represent 8.4 percent of the U.S. population. During the 1980's, when as many, or nearly as many, immigrants arrived as during any other ten-year period in U.S. history, the number of Hispanics grew by fully 7.7 million people (a 56 percent increase). No fewer than 54 percent of these additional individuals were immigrants. If current demographic trends continue, Hispanics could overtake African-Americans as the nation's largest minority group by the year 2010.

More than 60 percent of legal immigrants to the United States reside in just five states: California, Texas, Florida, New York, and Illinois; and perhaps a third of all immigrants, legal and illegal, settle in California alone. Along

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Richard Estrada is a columnist for the Dallas Morning News.

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with Asians, reports the Aspen Institute, Hispanics are the most urbanized of all major U.S. groups, with "92 percent of all Hispanics residing in cities and their surrounding metropolitan areas." Almost 40 percent of legal immigrants settle in only two greater metropolitan areas — Los Angeles and New York City. More persons of Mexican origin reside in Los Angeles today than in any city in Mexico, with the exception of Mexico City, the largest city on earth.

The views of writers such as journalist Ben Wattenberg and Julian Simon, a professor of business administration, have come to prevail in this policy debate. For them, massive immigration represents an unalloyed benefit. In this vein, the Hispanic Policy Development Project of the Aspen Institute adds that Hispanics "represent an aggregate $106 billion consumer market," and Linda Chavez, a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute, says Hispanic newcomers are assimilating at roughly the same rate as previous European immigrant groups, and are saving entire U.S. industries from collapse.

Yet, even as these arguments have gained national currency, a number of provocative reports are emerging that show the other side of the coin, one that looks surprisingly like what Mr. Muñoz describes — and far worse.

The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities in Washington, D.C., has reported that in 1990 Hispanic poverty rates outstripped those of blacks for the first time, and that during the 1980's the earnings gap between mainstream Americans and Hispanics grew wider than between the mainstream and any other impoverished group. The 1991 annual report of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services points out that nearly 40 percent of Mexican-Americans lack health insurance, a rate three times that of whites and nearly twice as high as African-Americans. New York City and Los Angeles officials point out that Hispanics are suffering an extremely severe crisis in low-cost housing. The Hispanic Policy Development Project found in 1990 that "Hispanic families are less likely than others to be headed by a married couple and more likely to be headed by a single parent." The results of the decline of two-parent families among poor blacks should raise a warning flag to anyone concerned with the future of poor Hispanics.

"Being undereducated is undoubtedly the single biggest obstacle to the overall economic assimilation of Hispanics," concludes the Hispanic Policy Development Project. The Hispanic dropout rate hovers around 40 or 50 percent, the highest of any group. According to a January 1990 study by the American Council of Education, high-school completion rates for Hispanics aged 18 to 24 dropped from 62.8 percent in 1985 to 56 percent in 1989. Hispanic immigrant students may be dropping out at a rate as high as 70 percent, according to Washington, D.C.-based policy analyst Patrick C. Burns, of the American Alliance for Rights and Responsibilities.

Before assessing the impact of massive immigration on Hispanic-Americans, it is important to note that newcomers to this country have not caused the structural shift in the economy from manufacturing to services; nor have they spurred the flight of jobs to the suburbs and offshore; nor have they, by themselves, spawned the acute shortage of affordable housing. When made, such charges can justifiably be dismissed as scapegoating. But the argument made here is that it is one thing to allege unfairly that immigration has been the fundamental cause of these problems, and another thing to point out that massive immigration has *exacerbated* them.

Central to the debate over the impact of immigration are the questions of job displacement and the depression of wages and working conditions. Labor economists generally believe that the greater the number of workers vying for a single job, the lower the wages an employer is obligated to offer. In promoting the argument that massive low-skill immigrant labor can create more jobs, over time, the pro-immigrationists appear indifferent to what happens to low-skill, low-income citizens with whom the immigrants compete for jobs immediately upon arrival. How much unemployment, underemployment, or related suffering on the part of citizen workers is appropriate while immigration creates jobs for them? A month? Six months? Longer? Does raising the numbers of impoverished immigrants really help during times of rising unemployment? If the dynamics of immigration create more jobs and prosperity for all workers, as the immigration cheerleaders aver, why, after more than two decades of relentless massive immigration, are Hispanic wage-earners losing ground?

When asked if certain citizen workers are so injured by the growing concentration of immigrants that they are exiting certain secondary labor markets (whether leaving for new locales, or remaining in the same area and merely leaving the labor market in order to turn to welfare), these experts explain that they cannot concern themselves with such "discouraged" workers (to use the official government term) because their studies are rooted in microeconomics, not macroeconomics.

This "out of sight, out of mind" explanation is particularly inadequate when the experts are confronted with examples of displacement in the early 1980's. Item: the apologists for massive immigration appear to blame the large-scale replacement of black workers by Hispanic immigrants in the hotel cleaning industry of Los Angeles on the blacks themselves, instead of acknowledging the obvious explanation that the immigrants depressed prevailing wages and systematically squeezed thousands of citizens out of the industry. To those who may suggest that the blacks left for greener pastures, some evidence indicates that this may have been the case for black women, but certainly not for black men. Their plight worsened.

Economist George J. Borjas reports finding little evidence of immigrants having displaced citizens or of having depressed their wages, while the Hispanic Policy Development Project encounters "little evidence to support the contention that Hispanics are taking away jobs from other Americans." But as labor economist Vernon M. Briggs, Jr. has noted, Borjas has chosen to study data for entire Standard Statistical Metropolitan Areas that include not only the inner cities where the immigrants tend to work, but several surrounding counties as well. Therefore, by studying statistics from very large areas where the immigrants aren't as well as where they are, evidence of their impact on the labor market is substantially diluted. That does not, however, mean they have had no impact. Moreover, there's no way of ascertaining how many workers did

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not try their luck in immigrant-flooded labor markets, not only because of artificially depressed wages and a lack of affordable housing, but because Spanish—so sizable is the immigrant work force—has replaced English as the workplace language in a growing number of industries in the secondary labor market.

The Hispanic Policy Development Project's perception of the issue is both curious and curiously stated. The issue is not about Hispanics, per se, displacing "other Americans," but rather about the adverse impact of Hispanic immigrants on all citizens in certain labor markets—including citizens of Hispanic descent. Recently arrived immigrants and especially illegal aliens are not, by definition, "Americans," if by the term is meant citizens of the United States. By failing to distinguish between Hispanic immigrants and U.S. citizens of Hispanic descent, the Project engages in a verbal sleight of hand, lumping both groups together. In consequence, the claims of Hispanic citizens about being adversely affected on the job market by legal or illegal Hispanic aliens are exorcised from the debate, if not from reality. When the proponents of massive immigration are ready to concede that adverse impact does occur, they cavalierly explain it away by noting that, after all, the only real impact is in Hispanic neighborhoods anyway. The message of this explanation and of the general tendency to exalt ethnicity over citizenship is that Hispanic-Americans are not "real" Americans. To such tangled webs do arguments of the Hispanic leadership too often lead.

The savings resulting from employing a Mexican lettuce picker or a Salvadoran busboy are, at least in part, passed on to consumers in the form of lower prices. But other related costs are borne by citizen taxpayers and low-income citizen minority workers and their families. These include: social services, both in terms of non-reimbursed publicly funded services extended to immigrants, and heightened competition for poor citizens seeking those services; depressed wages and working conditions for citizen workers; and the intensification of the shortage in low-cost housing. Not paid for directly, as to the cashier in a checkout line, these costs are hidden. They represent a *de facto* labor market subsidy to employers, who have come to view private gain off public domain as a God-given right.

The cost of educating immigrant schoolchildren has been overwhelming in the states of California, Texas, and Florida, where fully 65 percent of the nation's Hispanic children reside. Researchers have found that of the 613,222 English-deficient students in California in the spring of 1987, only 10 percent were born in the United States. Of the total number of students not fluent in English, no fewer than 73 percent were Spanish-speaking. At a time when many California schools are on a year-round schedule and massive teacher reductions are necessitated by budget constraints, it's only natural to ask why our nation's immigration policy continues to be blind to the educational resource limitations of its largest state. This is not to imply that immigrant schoolchildren already here should not be educated, but rather that they should be educated better by making available to them the resources that will otherwise have to be diluted among ever-growing numbers of new arrivals in the future.

An increasing number of students come from families lacking adequate housing. Some may double or triple up in apartments meant for one family. A truly egregious example of the Hispanic housing crisis evolved in Los Angeles in the 1980's with the phenomenon of the "garage people"—some 200,000 or more low-income, largely Hispanic individuals, including families, who reside in garages featuring no running water and only makeshift electrical connections.

While fewer low-rent housing units in the housing stock have intensified the shortage of affordable housing since 1978, an increase in the number of poor families has likewise been a factor. In Hispanic-American communities, recent immigration is responsible for a very large portion of that increase in poor families. Borjas' observation that a 10 percent increase in the immigrant flow doubles the immigrant population in those few cities in which the newcomers settle has implications for the housing crisis of Hispanic-Americans that even Messrs. Wattenberg and Simon might be able to comprehend—that is, if they were to abandon their air of studied unreality.

Unlike a labor surplus, which results in the reduction in wages offered, a surplus of housing seekers results in an increase in rents demanded—not just for the immigrants, of course, but for everyone seeking housing in the neighborhoods in which they settle. According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, which analyzed federal data released in 1989, some 40 percent of poor Hispanic households paid at least 70 percent of their income for housing costs in 1985. Impoverished Hispanic-Americans seeking federally funded housing were particularly harmed when Jack Kemp, secretary of Housing and Urban Development, recently defended the idea that illegal aliens have the same right to public housing as U.S. citizens.

Political power plays leveraged by massive increases in immigration have, in general, boomeranged on Hispanic-Americans, undermining the socioeconomic assimilation that has traditionally fostered true political power in the United States. Normally such political acculturation has evolved from individual attainments that may in turn help the individual to recognize class interest that transcends ethnicity, as opposed to succumbing to sheer tribalist politics. The real story of Hispanic politics in the last two decades is how little a skyrocketing population has contributed to Hispanic political clout. Hispanics today comprise only 1 percent of the nation's elected officials because a disproportionate lack of citizenship and a disproportionate number of under-voting-age youth render many Hispanics ineligible to vote, even as poverty distracts many who are eligible from exercising their right.

The impact of chronic massive immigration has reinforced the feeling among some disadvantaged Hispanic-Americans that they are without a country, that they are neither of the United States nor of the Latin American nations they or their forefathers left; that they are neither fish nor fowl. Even when, as is more often the case, Hispanic-Americans cling to their citizenship, exhibiting patriotism at every turn, they are increasingly victimized by the growing tendency of their own government and fellow citizens not of Hispanic descent to blur the distinction between Hispanic aliens and Hispanic citizens. To ask these particular Americans to stifle their concerns about massive

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impoverished immigration is to ask them to aspire to a status below that of their fellow citizens of European origin.

Which, come to think of it, may be what the most fervid proponents of massive immigration have in mind. Now that the visages of Uncle Tom and Uncle Remus have gone with the wind, the country is left only with the unique vision of *Wall Street Journal* editorials that pat browns *sans* green cards on the head for working hard and scared. Certain businesses and their boosters may also savor the tendency of immigrants, especially the illegal ones, to keep quiet about silly notions like prevailing wage rates and decent working conditions. Is it humanitarianism toward poor Hispanics or a yearning for their cheap and exploitable labor that explains the *Wall Street Journal*'s famous call for open borders?

Hispanic leaders routinely make common cause with the employers of alien labor because both are interested in seeing the numbers grow. Hispanic leaders by themselves lack the clout to set the nation's immigration policy, however, and to the degree that their names are invoked in that policy debate, it has been done to attempt to legitimize the maneuverings of their more powerful allies.

The impact of massive immigration figures to grow as experts project the doubling of the labor force of both Mexico and other Caribbean Basin countries in the next twenty-five years. (Mexico has recently been successful in lowering its birthrate, but at its lowest, Mexico still exceeds the U.S. birthrate at the height of our baby boom.)

Closing the southern border is not the answer. For one thing, Mexicans account for only about 28 percent of legal newcomers, according to immigration expert David Simcox. In any event, U.S. immigration policy should be blind to both color and national origin. Moreover, greater commerce between the United States and Mexico is too important to be interrupted. While trade and investment means a greater flow of goods and services, however, it should not mean an unregulated flow of people. Blurring this key distinction only promises to spur immigration-related discord between the two nations, and that would harm no U.S. group more than Hispanic-Americans. Should North American free trade materialize, immigration scholars generally believe that its economic benefits will not alleviate massive Mexican immigration for generations, if then; in fact, it may initially spawn more, as the money required to migrate is attained more quickly, along with the work place qualifications demanded in the United States.

Meanwhile, Linda Chavez's assertion that low-wage immigrants have "saved" certain industries notwithstanding, their labor represents but a temporary fix to those enterprises. Michael S. Teitelbaum, the former staff director of Congress's Select Committee on Population, observes that the garment industry, for example, is doomed here not because of the presence or absence of immigrant workers, but because the industry is poorly structured, undercapitalized, and incapable of sustained competition from more efficient offshore competitors. Economist Philip Martin says that of the three ways by which productivity can be enhanced—capital, technology, and more labor—more labor is the least efficient. The jobs that Messrs. Wattenberg, Simon, *et al.*, credit impoverished immigrants with creating are passé. Sweatshops are an industry America should be ditching.

We as a nation should be worrying why our chief competitors are choosing to limit immigration and capitalize upon the efficiencies of robotics and automation. Having initially invented them, how and why did we lose these technologies to others? One obvious answer is that a ready recourse to massive, low-wage, low-skill labor has served as a disincentive to modernize our methods of production. Declining productivity and a chronically expanding underclass is helping to prevent the nation from "migrating" into the brave new world of competitiveness and a higher standard of living for all. The assimilation of the present underclass, *including recent, impoverished immigrants*, is best achieved by curtailing immigration, rather than willfully promoting or acquiescing in more.

The notion that Hispanics in this country favor more immigration, while the rest of America favors less, is a false one that has poisoned the debate for too long.

Not for the first time in recent years, Congress has opted for the illogical. Under the 1990 law to expand legal admissions, one million immigrants or more are expected to enter the United States beginning in November 1991. Unless U.S. immigration policy is altered, the decade of the 1990's will witness the highest levels of immigration for any ten-year period in American history.

In contrast, the national interest would be best served by the vigorous enforcement of employer sanctions, something that is not being done more than four years after the provision was passed; a reasonable curtailment of legal immigration, here defined as no more than 500,000 a year (which would still have the United States resettling more legal newcomers than any other nation, surely a respectable benchmark for humanitarianism); and the replacement of our current nepotistic entry criteria with those based on skills and education instead. Even Borjas, like fellow economist Barry Chiswick before him, has stressed that the nation is failing to attract the highly qualified immigrants it needs.

Leaving our current immigration policy on automatic pilot without regard to the peaks and valleys of radically altered economic circumstances could promote a leveling down of American society, which in turn could be accompanied by an intensification of tribalist politics; ethnic and linguistic separatism; and finally, the further debasement of the coin of individual initiative, freedom, and liberty. Borjas, who finds little evidence of the adverse impact of immigrants on the labor market, and who appears to have become an economist because he lacked the verve of an accountant, admits, albeit in a footnote, that "the birth of an immigrant underclass and the presence of large numbers of unassimilated immigrants living in segregated ghettos may be a potential source of serious political and social problems in the future." As a last resort, the golden door could be slammed shut.

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Those who counsel continued massive immigration today on the grounds that the great European wave of the early 20th century "made it" downplay, dismiss, or ignore the assimilating effects of some forty years of greatly curtailed immigration after 1924. The fact that the closing of the door at the time was conducted with racist intent by no means implies that the ebb failed to benefit the immigrants already here.

In sum, the evidence shows that Hispanic-Americans have emerged as the greatest victims of U.S. immigration policy since 1965, instead of its greatest beneficiaries. The notion that Hispanics in this country favor more immigration, while the rest of America favors less, is a false one that has poisoned the debate for too long. This distortion must be corrected, especially by those who explicitly claim to represent Hispanic-Americans or who profess to care what Hispanic-Americans opine on the issue of immigration.

Weighing the impact of massive immigration on the largest group of Hispanic-Americans almost a quarter century ago, the late Professor George I. Sanchez of the University of Texas wrote: "The most serious threats to an effective program of acculturation in the Southwest have been the population movements from Mexico: first, by illegal aliens . . . Unless we can end the legal or illegal entry of *large numbers* of Mexican aliens, much of the good work that state and federal agencies are doing will go for naught; much more time and effort and many more millions of dollars will be required to bring Texas and her sister states to a desirable cultural level."

Hispanic-Americans who dare voice support for immigration controls today are routinely attacked and ostracized for allegedly wanting to "selfishly pull up the ladder" after themselves. Their critics ignore three basic points: that from the colonial period until the present time, there have always been limits on immigration to this country, whether *de facto* or *de jure*; that responsible arguments for numerical limits are extremely generous by global standards; and that even if the charge of hypocrisy were valid, the critics would still be obligated to address the argument that massive immigration is not good for the nation as a whole.

If viewed as a high jump event, today's Hispanic workers have had the bar set much higher than was the case for their European counterparts earlier in the century, without possessing a higher level of skill. No great manufacturing boom lies on the horizon to catapult today's impoverished immigrants into the middle class, as occurred for European immigrants and their families after World War II. And unlike that particular cohort, there is no end in sight to the current wave of immigration. The "breathing space" of assimilation is growing more and more limited for today's Hispanic immigrant.

The good news is that a certain number of Hispanics are doing well—Cuban-Americans and the Mexican-American middle class, for example, as well as a small but growing number of South Americans. But crafting social and economic policies based on the attainments of successful Hispanics, as opposed to attacking the problems plaguing impoverished Hispanics, is adventuresome at best. The recent history of the African-American underclass, and in particular of the decline of the two-parent family, must serve as a warning. Policymakers need the entire motion picture, not just the select still frames that have so misled Congress in this debate.

As the United States stands triumphant over the discredited totalitarians of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, who for decades refused their own citizens the right freely to leave their countries, let us be vigilant against our own ideological extremists who, swept up in a frenzy of libertarian or liberal jihad, would proceed to strip America's borders of all prudent regulation and unwittingly drive rich and poor even further apart, helping to erode the very bulwark of our nationhood, the middle class, in the process.

Through its exaggerated emphasis on numbers and nepotism, current U.S. immigration policy helps to impede assimilation, stymie bootstrapping, nurture welfare dependency, intensify tribalist politics, prolong labor intensiveness, and undermine productivity and competitiveness. The American people—including Hispanic-Americans—should challenge this policy lapse on the part of Congress with renewed vigor, disdaining options born of genuine racism, but also parrying spurious charges of racism designed to choke a debate the advocates of ever-greater immigration have found impossible to win on merit.

The citizenry would do well to remind their representatives of the wise counsel of Abraham Lincoln, who said, in the midst of a full-blown crisis of unity: "The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present. . . . As our case is new, so must we think anew and act anew. We must disenthrall ourselves, and then we shall save our country."

First Rain—Night

by William M. Galbraith

The tentative remarks of midnight rain
a cold voice at the window . . . And on the eaves
in a patterned yet a flexible refrain
insistence drips down heavily from the leaves.
And everything is closer than it was,
the darkness weighted and the limbs are bent
in air as heavy as a primal cause.
The walls of the room come in like discontent.

The night is endless only if the stars
extend it so—but caves are made of fear
and rainy nights where ancient avatars
invade the thoughts, and no one else can hear
the drip and drip and drip, endless and blind,
of showers of wonder flooding through the mind.

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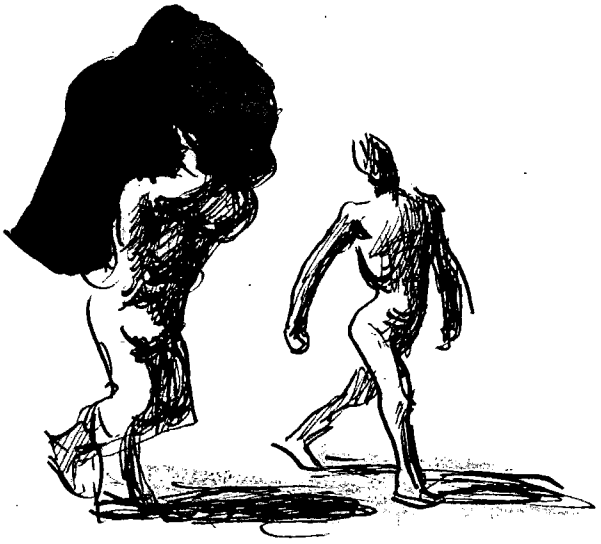
Dolorado

by Edward Redlinski



Warren Chappell

All in all, why did I come to this nightmarish New York? To fill my pockets with dollars, and then to go back and live as a money-changer? No. You know that the answer is no. Out of curiosity? Yes. . . . Somehow yes. But most of all out of anxiety. Does this legendary America the fertile, the emotional, the just, the wise, and the generous really exist? I went to see for myself — to touch — to try. Because I did not believe the stories of those who returned, or the narcissism of the Voice of America, or the pessimistic commentaries of *Trybuna Ludu*. I have been cheated too many times in my forty years of life. I have about twenty years left and then what? Am I going to fizzle out in this wretched Poland — isolated from the West and the East — and from within? Am I going to plod along like an old horse with its head hopelessly down, just to reach the end? To drink myself to death, to hang myself as two of my close friends did, in order to escape the ever-present lies? Or maybe I should try one more time — check? Maybe everything will be different?

Full of fear, excitement, and astonishment at my anxiety, on board of the airplane. Is it real, could it be true, that I, Michael, am flying now to the legendary New York! From Taplar, my village, a place where the windows are not boarded up, but yet restrictions dominate!

On the platform, amidst the crowd, there were my wife and child waving. I waved. . . . Not knowing if it were me or just my arm!

When the plane moved, shaking and gradually accelerating, I was pushed into my seat. Through the window I stared at the runway sneaking under the machine and me, creeping faster and faster until the runway finally dropped. With it went the grass, the trees, and the roofs, farther and farther away. Suddenly something pricked my eyes! While my arm is still, somebody's hands are clasped in prayer, somebody is whispering and whining: "Am I ever going to see the fields again? Am I going to return to the birches?" Who is it, so sentimental and lost in prayer?

A yokel. Inside Michael Multiexistent there is Michael the Polish yokel, born in a cottage near the forest, taught about the earth, horses, scythes, Holy Night, and the motherland. I'm sitting but he is standing inside me; peering out the round window, he salutes.

He bids a farewell to Poland. Whereas he is shedding tears and whimpering, another one is bubbling with joy! At last! Hey, we're flying! Ogling the stewardesses, trying to decode signs in foreign languages, analyzing the offered breakfast, and peeking at his fellow passengers.

"I'm flying!" he screams.

"Am I really flying to this famous America? Today my Slavic feet will tread in Manhattan!"

This one is happy — who is it?

A wanderer. A traveler. Inside Michael Multiexistent there is Michael the Wanderer. Antithesis of the yokel, the bush, the potato, the milksop. He loathes the village, stagnation, the motherland-provinciality, Slavic lyricism, and narrow-mindedness. If man is to live once, why is it that he ties himself to one area? Nonsense! Or to one wife? Nonsense! Or to one nation? In Europe alone there are thirty countries! Add to this some twenty-five beautiful countries like Australia, India, Japan, and Canada! Counting them all, it works out to two countries per person per year. Roam, roam! Don't be like Burek, the dog, who guards only one doghouse.

"There is only one motherland!" answers Michael the Yokel.

"Just like there is only one father and one mother."

"You, Yokel," the Wanderer answers. "If you think about it, everything in the world is unique, is one and only, every second."

"Like bushes, like trees, which grow only in one place and extend their roots, piercing the earth and outgrowing it,

---

Edward Redlinski is a Polish novelist living in New York. This passage is excerpted from his novel Dolorado, *and was translated by Ewa Bardach-Elkadi.*

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and don't skate on the surface with airplanes. You see? He wants America."

And America is approaching. Already, we are over the North Sea, the captain announces, then the Atlantic, then Canada seems to be below us. We are flying—me and my two Michaels inside me, the Yokel and the Wanderer, the Homebody and the Traveler. Like a little red apple cut into a cross and rock-and-roll, like Coca-Cola and kvass.

At last we are asked to fasten our seat belts. The airport!

Stamps—the suitcase—WELCOME!—you must be Andrzej and Krystyna—kisses—searching for a taxi—instead of setting the sun is blinding—we're driving—what's new with Zosia—and Aunt Anka—and the queues—and "Solidarity"—and here's the bay—do you see the yachts?—and here's Brooklyn—we get out—elevator, doors—three locks—it's hot Andrzej, turn on the air conditioner—you sit, Michael, catch your breath—drink something—eat—and tell us everything. . . .

I talk, looking at them with suspicion. Am I really in America? Let me go to the window and look out.

"What are you looking at? You haven't eaten yet."

"The cars," I say.

"What about the cars?"

"Aren't they too long?"

"No," they say.

"This is America. Here everything is bigger. The cars are bigger. The shops are bigger. The trees are bigger. The fish are bigger. The speeds are faster. The successes are greater. The adversities are more intense. The steaks are larger. Do you understand?"

"I do."

"O.K., do you want whiskey, gin, vodka, wine, juice, or cola?"

"A pint of beer and to bed."

"If you'd like to sleep, let's go to my house."

I grab my suitcase and we run to the subway. . . . I get an explanation as to where, what, how much, the route, transfers.

"We get out here."

The sign says "Nassau." We take the stairs to the surface. It's strange: it's New York, Brooklyn, but the houses are like those in Grajewo. Only the colors are more vivid and daring.

"Greenpoint," you explained, "is a Polish neighborhood," and over there, across the river, you pointed out the tops of the skyscrapers, and I saw one with a sloping roof. There . . . Manhattan.

Manhattan! . . .

"Tomorrow we'll get you maps and tourist guides. You'll sit and make a plan. Roam around for a week. And then to work. Here, time is money."

In the morning I buried myself in the maps and guides. Famous streets and famous names; my hands are trembling. Broadway! Central Park! The Empire State Building! East River, the Hudson, Long Island, Fifth Avenue, Forty-Second Street. . . .

Statue of Liberty!

"Take this pill, otherwise you won't be able to sleep. . . ."

I swallowed it. I fell asleep. No dreams. Until there was a howl, a roar under the windows. I jumped . . . then sat down wondering if it was an alarm?! What's going on? Is it World War III? To the window. I saw a car with flashing lights and the sign POLICE like the ones you see in the American TV series.

To the bathroom. One, two, oh, to Manhattan. Already shaved and teeth taken care of, and perfumed, and dressed, equipped with tourist guides, already at Nassau Station. The token was bought. Inserted. Platform.

The wall tiles full of scrawls. And something stinks . . . Stinks? Or maybe it doesn't stink? It's different here, cents, pounds. So maybe the odors are rearranged as well? Clamor—alligator GG is creeping out of the tunnel. How full it is of scribbles! And in the middle, flourishes—black, pink, blue. A black man keeps his legs high up on a pipe, chews, reads. A pale fellow chews ads, oh, the *New York Times*. A fatso is standing with earphones, bouncing, swaying, dancing with himself, with his reflection in the windowpane. A woman is reading hieroglyphics from the end to the beginning, in columns. A red-haired man is transporting something green in a jar, something alive, reptile-cicada-insect . . . teasing it with a pen. The atmosphere is African-Italian-Puerto Rican. International. Multilingual. Well, well . . . It has begun. Here one can get a shock.

'Manhattan!' crows the Traveler. 'Oh Manhattan! My Czestochowa! My Rome and Vatican!'

Let it hit. If only to wake me up from the socialist coma.

Queens Plaza. Change trains here, the way they do it in New York; transfer. Tables, arrows. . . . It's here!

"Manhattan transfer!"

"Manhattan!" crows the Traveler. "Oh Manhattan! My Czestochowa! My Rome and Vatican!"

The F is already arriving. Boarding. People are more densely packed, more perfumed, more expensive. And this confusion, confusion! Babylon.

"You are riding in the New York subway, Yokel!" the Traveler trembles with delight.

"Geez. . . . On the New York subway! I—Michael from Taplar."

"We're riding under water. . . . Above us is the East River. . . ."

"East River? I don't believe it. It's a dream."

"Soon, Fifth Avenue . . . America's Champs Elysées. The Champs Elysées of the American Hemisphere. . . ."

"I don't believe it, I don't believe it! Only day before yesterday I was lapping beer in a bar on Warsaw Street. . . ."

Exit.

But watch out Michaels; here's what we're going to do: don't look yet to the side or up. Only at your shoes. Go out to this famous avenue with eyes on the sidewalk. And then suddenly crane the neck and in one swallow gulp down a shot of this hundred-proof New York!

Am I gonna fall?

Already. . . . I am looking at the sidewalk but feeling the heights. How? With what? Maybe with hair. My hair is being pulled upward—vertically. My thoughts are being

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tugged vertically. What is pulling, what is tugging? Force. Something antigravitational. The madness of these builders.

Fear of raising the head. . . . There were so many legends about . . . But . . .

I close my eyes—tilt my head back—pull myself together. And suddenly the trap doors of the eyes go click and I open.

Geez. . . .

Knees weaken. . . .

They didn't lie, those who told the stories. As if I'd drunk half a gallon and . . . To sit, geez, to sit—as long as I'm standing. Over there somebody is sitting on the curb, emptying an Adidas bag. Let us sit, Michaels, let us sit, as long as we are not lying down.

When seated, the height is even higher, twice as high. The Michaels are bewildered. The Yokel and the Wanderer. Inside a poor spinning head words go round and round: Wealth! Might! Wealth! Pride! Might! Pride! Wealth! Might . . .

But I hear squeaking:

"Maybe it's an illusion. . . . Sort of stereovision? Maybe these cars, herds of cars—like herds of buffalo in Westerns—maybe it's all make-believe? How about lying across the street—let them knock me down, run me over—only when in pain, with bones crushed—shall I believe them then? Or hit my head against the wall of this building—what if it's just a decoration? Maybe somebody from the New York Propaganda Bureau is walking in front of me showing a special film for the newcomer from a communist country? After all, for what purpose would anyone erect such buildings, geez! Might! Pride! Wealth . . . The neck is already hurting, Michaels, let us go into the crowd. First steps . . ."

Lead in the shoes. Oppressiveness. And diminution. Dwarfing. . . . Because of the hugeness. Because of the millions. Because of the billions. Because of the nation. Because of everything. Because of the canyons. Colorado. And because of the grain. Of sand. I. Lie down. Die . . . Let it absorb. And dissolve. It would be better . . .

not to come,
sit at home,
with head in the sand,
and wiggle with krakowiak rhythm
Ci ja, ci ja, dylu, dylu . . .
It's too powerful. It's too rich.

Oh, get your bearings. . . . Where is the handkerchief? From the airplane. In the bag. It's here. Let it refresh. Wipe the forehead. Ooff. . . .

And the Wanderer: "To Broadway!"

And the Yokel: "Oh Geez, a small park . . . To sit! Catch one's breath. It's difficult, oh it's difficult, I am frightened. . . ."

The Wanderer: "Breathe, wheeze, when Broadway is over there!"

And the Yokel: "That's it! Enough! Why, why should I aggravate myself? The more I see, the more I will miss my bleak motherland!"

"Bury your head in the sand?"

"Yes, deep into the sand, damn it, somewhere near the cottage! Even so we will never achieve this. The path to the side . . . It's gone, too bad, let the grass grow over us."

"Both of you Michaels come to your senses." I, Multiexistent, call both of them back.

"Let us put away the old knives and forks; we are not going to taste New York the way people from Warsaw or Taplar would. Calm down, guys. Neither with envy, nor with sorrow. Not with animosity, nor with reverence. Look with an eye that's neither Red nor underground. Calmly. Kindly. Look. Listen. Absorb. Taste. Let us then enter the human jungle, Michaels. Oh, the human forest. Jungle. The city."

Plodding along, walking, the Michaels—in this famous Manhattan, renowned Fifth, notorious Forty-Second, here, there, back and forth, wherever the crowd takes us . . . Legs! Buttocks! Breasts! Hair! Teeth! Lipstick! Bracelets! Green! Burgundy! Yellowish! Ultramarine! Black! Cars! Screams! Whistles! Eyes! Teeth! Jewelry! Shops! Legs! Boots! Hands! Lips! Pineapples! Small Crowd! Dancing! Trumpet! Drunkard! Nudity! Ice cream! Hotel! Honda! Central Park! Garden in a hallway! A stricken woman, hair in disarray, end of the world! Radio City . . . Fountains . . . Braids! Helicopter! Betting parlor! . . .

I looked.

Sex—community center . . .

Surrealism.

Shops, shops, shops, shops . . . And there's too much of everything. Such as tape recorders—this is already tape recorder mania. . . . Such as coffee—half a hectare of cupboards, shelves with coffee. Such as bread—it's quarter of an hour to choose and agony to decide. Such as beer—in many different languages—in bottles, cans, casks, kegs—in packages of four, six, eight, one hundred sixty-eight. . . . Such as shampoo—so many brands that although you promise yourself not to rage against socialism, all this can make your blood boil! Here there's so much but there, in that desperate country, baited from the East, and the West, and from within, you never know what will be in the stores or where, or when. And here there is shampoo for cats, for dogs, damn our stores . . . meatless stores. Anticommercial warehouses. Department stores with no merchandise. Gas stations without gasoline. Geez!

When I found myself in Macy's and saw the hectares of counters, glass cases, shelves, eight floors, hectares of merchandise—it's all unbelievable—I became sad. Even worse: bitterness overcame me, followed immediately by resentment.

It occurred to me why in that country shelves are empty, meat hooks are naked . . .

Because they intercept. Somewhere, somehow, yet they intercept. Americans. I am serious.

They intercept, of course, without breaking the law. Humanitarian law. They are above reproach—officially and morally. They. But . . . He? God?

You, High Up There, without Thy Will not even a hair, not even one penny will fall, do you hear me?

Why in my wretched Poland can things never be even half normal?

Why have You decided to persecute this ill-fated nation so?

Well?

Why? ◇

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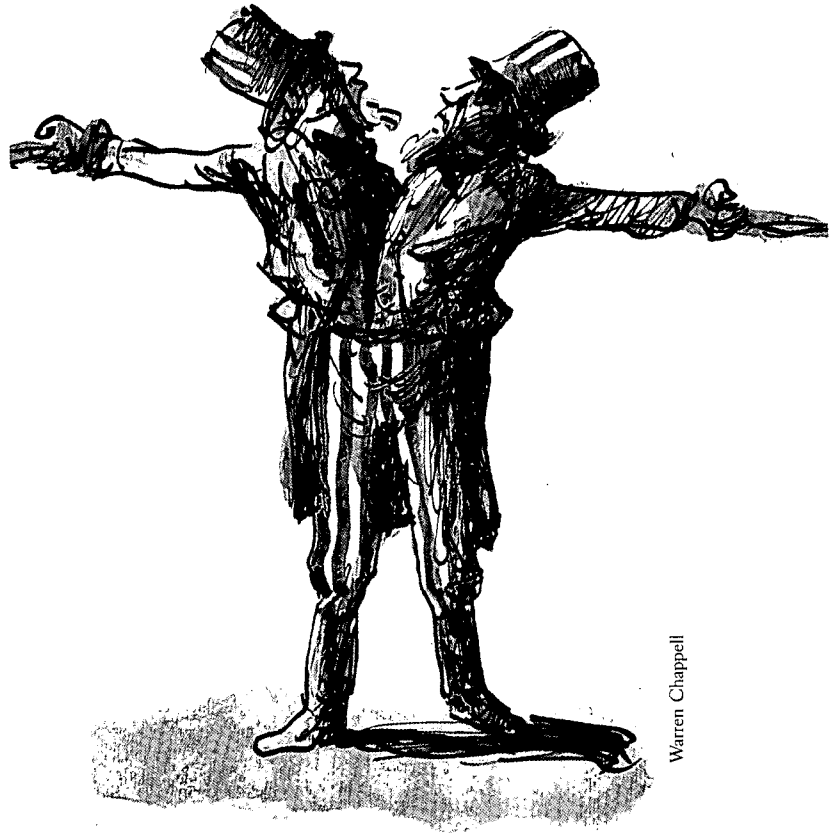
Revolution and the American Mind

by Robert L. Paquette

"The world has never had a good definition of liberty."
—Abraham Lincoln



Warren Chappell

Revolutions: Reflections on American Equality and Foreign Liberations
by David Brion Davis
Cambridge: Harvard University Press; 130 pp., $19.95

◆

Food lines lengthen in Moscow; show trials continue in Beijing; bicycles replace motor vehicles in Havana. As the Warsaw Pact and Berlin Wall crumble, so does the standing of Mao and Ché, even on college campuses. The closing of this millennium may not bring the kingdom of heaven, but it has brought searching reconsideration of the meaning of revolution.

In three essays composed for the Massey lectures at Harvard University, David Brion Davis, one of this country's preeminent intellectual historians and author of two prize-winning volumes in a proposed trilogy on the history of slavery, reflects on how the meaning of revolution shaped the birth and maturation of the United States. For many scholars the outbreak of the American Revolution marked the beginning of an Age of Democratic Revolution, which extended to the middle of the 19th century. It was a remarkable period of economic growth and social upheaval to be sure, arguably the most important period in the making of the modern world. On both sides of the Atlantic, in country after country, disaffected social groups emerged and coalesced into mass insurgencies. Taken as a whole, they threw down the gauntlet to hierarchy, challenged arbitrary and despotic power, and championed citizenship, civil liberty, and natural rights. Alexis de Tocqueville captured the central tendency of this age when he concluded in 1840 that democratic revolution is "an irresistible fact. Gradually the distinctions of rank are done away with; the barriers that once severed mankind are falling; property is divided, power is shared by many, the light of intelligence spreads and the capacities of all classes tend toward equality."

By this time revolution had acquired a whole new meaning, thanks in large part to Tocqueville's countrymen. Long

Robert L. Paquette is an associate professor of history at Hamilton College in Clinton, New York.

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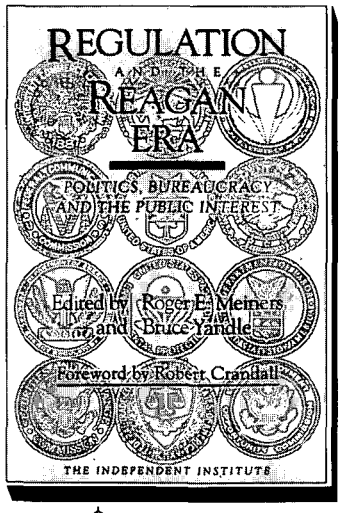
before the French Revolution, the word had no political definition. Revolution denoted circularity and was frequently applied to the movement of celestial bodies. In the 17th century revolution acquired a political meaning but retained the element of circularity. Hence Samuel Johnson in his celebrated dictionary defined revolution in one sense as "a change in the state of government," for the example he clearly had in mind was the Glorious Revolution and the return of legitimate government in England under William of Orange. France's revolution, as Edmund Burke saw to his horror early on, was a "compleat revolution" or "innovation," qualitatively different in its conscious use of collective violence to remake society, root and branch, and he contrasted it unfavorably not only with the Glorious Revolution but the American Revolution as well. From the time of Burke's reflections to that of Davis's many keen observers, and not exclusively conservatives, have found the contrasts so striking that they have questioned whether the American Revolution was a revolution at all. Indeed, some have gone so far as to argue that what began in 1776 was essentially a conservative movement.

Davis quickly raises the question and eventually relates it to various ways specific individuals and social groups in the United States have had their values confirmed or denied by foreign revolutions, especially the great French Revolution. The Founding Fathers, as Davis acknowledges, lacked Burke's perspicacity. Even after regicide and the Red terror, most of them continued to look with affinity on what was happening in France. Not until the fierce debates in 1795 over Jay's Treaty had passed did conspicuous defections from the prevailing view begin to mount.

Why this overlong embrace? In parts one and two Davis argues that religious millennialism and the language of equality conspired to cloud public judgment. Religious millennialism fostered what Davis calls the "illusion of an inevitable and predictable sequence of events," the naive hope that despite its bloody excesses and betrayed promises, the French Revolution would eventually conform to the American trajectory. With its inherent ability to relocate quickly sources of evil, millennialism provided justification for the extremes of destruction and carnage. To make his point Davis retells John Adams' story—a wonderful allegory for our own times—about the famed chemist and French hotspur Joseph Priestley. When after the execution of Louis XVI, Adams challenged him point by point to provide the empirical evidence that the French Revolution was fighting for the cause of all mankind, Priestley could not readily do so. To save himself from further strikes, he fell back on revelation and prophecy. Similarly, Thomas Jefferson, in a letter to Madame d'Enville, reassured her that despite the "horrors" that were attending the onset of the French Revolution, the new government "would approximate us more to one another. . . . But the way to heaven, you know, has always been said to be strewed with thorns." Belatedly, in 1816, Jefferson would concede to Adams that Adams' "prophecies" about the French Revolution had been truer than his own.

At the end of the 18th century equality, while a staple part of a shared, trans-Atlantic revolutionary vocabulary, possessed multiple and ambiguous meanings. Davis convincingly argues that while some overlap in meaning existed, enough to delude revolutionaries on both sides and to present future slaveholders with intractable problems, general usage of equality in revolutionary America and France grew apart because each revolution germinated in quite different soils. The overthrow of France's feudal system necessarily equated liberty and equality for some time. In a strongly seigneurial society, freedom would entail an immediate leveling of status between the lower and upper ranks of society. America's revolutionaries, without this ponderous feudal baggage, wanted to preserve from arbitrary power what French commoners had yet to attain. In this sense the American Revolution was conservative. From the start Americans generally proved far better positioned in their society to "intuit" natural equality and then move quickly beyond to claim other meanings, such as equality of opportunity. Consequently, the excesses of the French Revolution might be explained by the effort required to breach a still formidable, if decaying, social order to which Americans were largely unaccustomed. As one acute French observer told Thomas Jefferson in 1790, "the characteristic difference

REVOLUTION DERAILED



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between your revolution and ours is that having nothing to destroy, you had nothing to injure, and labouring for a people, few in number, incorrupted, and extended over a large tract of country, you have avoided all the inconvenience of a situation contrary in every respect."

Davis suggests how conflicting emotions conditioned members of America's revolutionary generation to identify with the French Revolution. On one hand, it acted to reinforce a broad feeling that human beings could indeed make their own future, what Davis, borrowing from Robert Darnton, calls the sense of "possibilism." On the other hand, a generation that was testing "whether societies of men are really capable or not of establishing good government from reflection and choice" had to be insecure about the survivability of the great experiment. Anxious about internal and external enemies, leaders of the fledgling republic might be forgiven for embracing kindred spirits where they were not. Enthusiasm for the French Revolution, Davis points out, could obscure domestic divisions. Elites that proclaimed French principles could pretend they were not elites. Such enthusiasm could even become "the litmus test that would reveal either ideological purity or a betrayal of the principles of America's War of Independence and the sacred mission it bequeathed."

Age, undoubtedly, also played a role. Revolutionary America was young America. How many early supporters, like the brilliant John Randolph of Roanoke, could justifiably write off their early identification with the French Revolution as youthful exuberance and naïveté? In addition, some French radicals, at least in the beginning, looked to members of America's revolutionary generation for ideas. Courted and flattered, they could have easily deceived themselves into thinking that they and the French were fighting the same battle.

Perhaps more remarkably, enthusiasm for French principles among whites in the United States continued to wax strong for years after those principles had helped to ignite a slave revolution in France's Caribbean colony of Saint Dominique. A few white notables, boldly moving from religious and secular meanings of equality to a broad critique of the arbitrary rule of one man by another, defended the slave revolution and justified the bloodletting. The majority, however, particularly white Southerners, turned away to confront the rising spectre of servile warfare on their own lands incited by black Jacobins. By 1800 a series of slave conspiracies and revolts throughout the Americas with clear connections to the great revolutions in France and Saint Dominique confirmed their worst fears. Little wonder then that in 1801 President Thomas Jefferson, instead of using Saint Dominique's former slaves to thwart Napoleon and advance United States interests in the Mississippi Valley, actually encouraged Napoleon to reoccupy Saint Dominique, for in Jefferson's estimation, the greater threat was race war. But in the long run, Jefferson could not escape what antebellum white Southerners would read into his famous words on equality, and many, like Edmund Ruffin, would come to repudiate him as an abolitionist.

In truth the older Jefferson approximated Adams in his indictment of the French Revolution. Davis's commentary on their correspondence suggests that he, too, has qualified his early thinking on revolution. Like Adams, he has sickened of the enormities committed in its name. Like Burke, he recognizes that the traditions and values of one society cannot easily be exported by revolution to another that is ill-prepared to accept them. Yet, in the end, he appears to find consolation in the reforms that revolution or the threat of revolution has precipitated, albeit indirectly: "I can only shudder when I think what our world would be like today if industrialization had advanced without political revolutions and the fear of revolutionaries, who, for all their mistakes and self-delusions, perpetuated dreams of equality and social justice."

He has a point. Strategic reform has not always come easy to conservatives. If the modern world has suffered too much for its extravagant faith in human progress and its shameful disregard of continuity, it has also suffered too much from repeated failures to recognize legitimate cries for social justice.

LIBERAL ARTS

EMIGRATION

My opinion, with respect to emigration, is, that, except of useful Mechanics and some particular descriptions of men or professions, there is no need of encouragement: while the policy or advantage of its taking place in a body (I mean the settling of them in a body) may be much questioned; for, by so doing, they retain the Language, habits and principles (good or bad) which they bring with them.

—*George Washington, in a letter to John Adams, November 15, 1794*

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L'affaire De Man

by Milton J. Rosenberg

"Colleges and books only copy the language which the field and the workyard made."
—Ralph Waldo Emerson

Signs of the Times: Deconstruction and the Fall of Paul de Man
by David Lehman
New York: Poseidon Press;
318 pp., $21.95

◆

There is mention in the English annals of the 14th century of syphilis as "the malady of France." Inevitably, blame was bilaterally distributed and the French of the same period called the disease *"la maladie d'Angleterre."*

A new malady of France, in the form of a disease of culture, reached across the Channel some twenty years ago but could not take hold in England. Instead it found a breeding ground in the humanities departments of American universities. Deconstruction has, since then, become epidemic in the intellectual world of the United States, and it persists long after it has been put aside in France by still fresher forms of conceptual derangement.

Rather like the theory of relativity, deconstruction has both a "special" and a "general" form. The special theory of deconstruction was intended as a method for the interpretive reading of "texts." Jacques Derrida, the founding provocateur of deconstruction, has taught a generation of academic acolytes to consider texts to mean everything from Sophocles and Flaubert to rock lyrics and cereal box inscriptions. All, according to Derrida, have no intrinsic meaning and they differ neither in artistic merit nor in moral worth. These qualities reside merely in the eye and mind of the reader, and finally the proper function of criticism is not to elucidate, evaluate, or appreciate, but to deconstruct—that is, to destroy. Thereby one destroys not only the authority of the

Warren Chappell

work in question but also the delusional sense that we command our language (in fact it "speaks us") or that such mistaken standards as reason, truth, or beauty have any possible claim upon us.

In its general form deconstruction, when placed in intellectual history, comes to look very much like a *reconstruction* of nihilism, that older philosophy which regards the concept of meaning as meaningless and the idea of truth as an utter lie. Thus the broader deconstructionists—who now fill and often dominate the humanities departments of our universities—raid far beyond mere literature as they flail away at the graphic arts, at science, at law, and at philosophy itself. And in these forays, as they pull apart yet other "texts," they continue to proclaim that objectivity, reason, and meaningful moral purpose are all and always vain illusions. Well—almost all and almost always: for in their voraciousness the leading deconstructionists have, in recent years, attempted to gobble up Marxism and feminism. The purpose has not been to deconstruct *their* texts but rather to demonstrate a great new insight: that the significant literary and intellectual works of Western civilization, whether in literature, law, or philosophy and ranging from classical antiquity to the middle of this century, are all in fact merely doing the work of repressive capitalism by keeping women, workers, homosexuals, and non-Westerners entrapped in a sense of unworthiness.

As they have frollicked in their newly opened neo-Marxist playground, American deconstructionists have enjoyed the added delights of attacking the traditions of the institutions that house and pay them. Assaulting the "canon" of significant authors, shifting the work of English departments away from Shakespeare, Dickens, or James and toward Spillane, Madonna, and 2 Live Crew, burdening half-literate undergraduates with the opacities of Derrida, De Man, and their American imitators, they have, in the humanities departments of our universities, made a desolation and called it "victory."

While scholarly argument about deconstruction has, in recent years, begun to emerge in the academic journals and intellectual reviews, it has hardly been reported to the broad public. David Lehman's new book is a welcome contribution. In vivid reportage it brings to the general reader the bad news from Harvard, Yale, Johns Hopkins, Duke, Berkeley, and kindred scholarly enclaves. Lehman, who has apparently spent his time as an indentured academic in the English department at Ithaca College, has been a close observer of this scene. His stance is amusement at the follies of his peers, but just behind his puckish persona one senses deeper reserves of disgust and rage.

Milton J. Rosenberg is a professor of social psychology at the University of Chicago.

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Anyone who has toiled in the rotting vineyard of contemporary literary studies but has stood apart from the avid deconstructors, post-structuralists, new Marxists, vindictive feminists, and homosexual polemicists is rich with horror stories. The ones Lehman has to tell are as instructive and devastating as any: they feature once eager young scholars driven out of the academy by the maddening obfuscations of their tenured seniors; authors central to the shaping of the Western literary and philosophical traditions removed from the curriculum and replaced by vociferous enemies of our common culture; and the rise of a species of critical prose so willfully dense and neologistic as to be essentially incomprehensible.

Lehman is not only a teacher of literature in whose courses one would be happy to have one's son or daughter enrolled, but is a poet of considerable accomplishment and commendation. To the descriptive task of limning the brave new world of some of his nihilistic and intellectually disordered fellows he brings the poet's saving graces of wit and multi-shaded wordplay, and also the consoling hope that the waves of cultural destructiveness that have flooded over university shores will inevitably ebb. Indeed, the reaction against the new nihilism has been rising: Allan Bloom's book *The Closing of the American Mind* struck it a glancing blow; Roger Kimball's *Tenured Radicals* drew the battle line intelligently and persuasively; and Lehman has now advanced the struggle in a distinctive way. He has given back to his colleagues a witty, informed, and detailed indictment of the new barbarism that could tilt some confused minds back toward reason and the reasonable uses of tradition. At the same time he has provided the general reader, who has heard the distant rumbles of these new academic wars, with a coherent account of who has been doing what and with which and to whom. All of this he has done in the first half of his fervent but paradoxically good-humored volume. The second half shifts to the central *scandale* of the whole affair: the case of Paul de Man.

De Man was to Derrida as St. Paul was to his greater mentor. From Yale University—and in his peregrinations to the English departments of the Western world—he proselytized deconstruction while transforming it into something even more veiled yet more severe and more destructive of moral intelligence than was the case with Derrida. He became, in the general estimation of the ever-growing deconstructionist movement, the perfect exemplar of their doctrine.

Born and raised in Belgium, he came to this country only after World War II and completed his graduate education at Harvard. It was generally understood that during the war he had been "in the resistance" or perhaps had been a refugee. Beyond such vague hints he never spoke of his past. Indeed, after his fateful encounter with Derrida, and his transformation into the leading American deconstructionist, he often argued that no "text" (including the text of a human life) can or should be understood historically. Nevertheless, his own history, as it was revealed after his death in 1983, shook and appalled his many deconstructionist colleagues and disciples. In effect, the truth about the man De Man, once it was revealed, propelled deconstruction into a basic crisis in which the faith was to be tested.

What was discovered was that during the war he had been a Nazi collaborator. As a literary and cultural critic for both the major collaborationist French-language and Flemish newspapers of occupied Belgium he had commented with consistent enthusiasm on the new Nazi order. Furthermore, he had welcomed the expunging of Jewish influence from the cultural life of Europe, and had endorsed the plan to ship all Jews off to some distant African location. In general, he had, in his wartime journalism, been a major voice in the attempt to sell Nazism as a revivifying resource for the new Europe that he expected would emerge, racially cleansed and culturally purified by the inevitable German victory.

In addition to the uncovering of his collaborationist journalism it came to light that De Man was a bigamist: he had abandoned his European wife and children without a divorce and had started a new American family. He had also been a shady, probably larcenous, businessman until 1948, when he managed to slip into the United States.

Deconstruction does not stand or fall on the private moral failure of one of its major proponents—no more than the aesthetic quality of Wagner's operas can be judged by reference to the monstrous aspects of his personality and life story. But the De Man case does illuminate deconstruction (and the related, newer forms of critical theory that it has spawned) in two ways. It, like the nihilism from which it arose, is a doctrine particularly useful in freeing the guilty from their guilt. By destroying continuity and meaning in *any* narrative, including real human lives as they have been lived, it freed not only De Man but his enthusiasts from that moral responsibility that is the anchoring condition of civilized existence.

The larger illumination shed by the De Man case comes not from his story but from the pitiful efforts of his apologists. Reviewing the rush of essays that flowed from the deconstructionists after the revelations, Lehman shows that in their exculpations of De Man, his followers were in almost all instances lame, evasive, morally incompetent, and, in some instances, demonstrably dishonest as well.

By their works shall ye know them. The real scandal of the De Man case is that his doctrine was used by his disciples to avoid the claims of truth and moral judgment. But that, of course, is what the movement has always been about. One ends the book grateful to Lehman for his efforts and for his skilled and valuable achievement, but wondering whether the new nihilism will continue to prosper, or whether the voice of reason may again come to prevail in the academy. ◈

LIBERAL ARTS

LET THE REVOLUTION BEGIN

The Federal Election Commission reported last March that Midwesterners are the Americans most reluctant to contribute one dollar of their taxes to the presidential election campaign fund by checking the appropriate box on IRS tax forms. In 1989 only 18.2 percent opted for the checkoff in the Midwest, compared to 28.5 percent in the Northeast. The percentage of Americans nationwide earmarking a dollar for campaign funding dropped from 28.7 percent in 1980 to 19.9 percent in 1989.

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Win or Lose

by William R. Hawkins

Secrets of the Vietnam War
by Lt. Gen. Phillip B. Davidson
Novato, California: Presidio Press;
214 pp., $18.95

◆

When Desert Storm commander General Norman Schwarzkopf thanked President Bush for letting the military fight the Gulf war on its own terms, he was expressing an idea deeply felt in the Pentagon for over twenty years: "No more Vietnams." Both Schwarzkopf and his boss, General Colin Powell, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, experienced combat in Vietnam. Schwarzkopf did two tours, advising South Vietnamese paratroopers and commanding a U.S. infantry battalion. Powell also served two tours and won the Bronze Star for heroism. When Schwarzkopf says "the Vietnam War was a political defeat, but it was not a military defeat," he is speaking for an entire generation.

But if Desert Storm was a victory because it was not fought as the Vietnam War was fought, could the Vietnam War have been a victory if it had been fought as Desert Storm was? Retired Army Lt. Gen. Phillip B. Davidson thinks so. Davidson was chief intelligence officer for generals William Westmoreland and Creighton Abrams, the top commanders in Vietnam. Before that he had seen combat both in World War II and in Korea. After Vietnam, he taught military history at West Point. His book *Vietnam at War* (Presidio Press, 1988) is the best one-volume history of the conflict in its entirety, from 1946 to 1975.

His new book, which was written before the Gulf crisis but published after Iraq invaded Kuwait, was intended as a memoir. It throws light on several issues, including the Tet offensive and Westmoreland's battle with CBS News. However, its final two chapters, "How We Lost the War" and "How We Could Have Won the War," are likely to be the main attraction for most readers.

According to Davidson, there were two occasions when the United States could have taken decisive action to win the war while a majority of the public still supported armed intervention. The first was February 1965, when it was confirmed that North Vietnam had sent its first full combat division into South Vietnam. The second was after the Tet offensive had been repulsed with heavy Communist losses in 1968. Both instances dramatized the fact that the conflict was not a civil war or an insurgency, but an invasion of the South by the North. The Saigon regime was able to handle the local Viet Cong; it was the regular army of North Vietnam, heavily equipped by the Soviet Union and China, that offered the fatal threat. An effective American strategy should have concentrated on defeating Hanoi by the use of America's superior power, and not accepted battle on Hanoi's terms, chasing guerrillas around the jungles in the South.

The campaign outlined by Davidson is very similar to that of Desert Storm. First, an all-out air war aimed at North Vietnamese military targets and supply lines: Hanoi's ports would be closed by mines and by blockade, and its few railroads, on which supplies were being imported from China, would be cut. The U.S. did drop a lot of ordinance on North Vietnam, but for most of the war critical targets were placed off limits to American pilots. For example, restrictions prevented attacks on enemy airfields from which MIGs were taking off or SAM sites that were under construction (this for fear of hurting Soviet advisors). The port of Haiphong was not bombed and mined until 1972, when Nixon, as Johnson had done, stopped the bombing in exchange for deceptive peace talks. Against Iraq, the U.S. waged Davidson's kind of campaign from the start without "bombing pauses" and achieved devastating results.

In the end, of course, the war would have had to have been won on the ground. "Existing units of the United States Army and Marine Corps should have been sent to South Vietnam as soon as available," says Davidson. "Selected reserves of all forces should have been mobilized and prepared for early deployment. . . . When the buildup of the ground forces permitted, a corps-sized force would move into Laos, cut the Ho Chi Minh trail and stay there." (For a more detailed study of the importance of such a move see *The Key to Failure: Laos & the Vietnam War*, by Norman B. Hannah.) It might also have been necessary to invade North Vietnam itself, though, as in Iraq, the aim would have been to destroy the North Vietnamese Army, not occupy cities or to take responsibility for running the country. "In short, the American leaders should have accepted the undeniable reality they were at war—*a real war*."

It was the failure of President Johnson to take the war seriously that Davidson blames for America's ultimate defeat. "The brutal truth is that Johnson fought the Vietnam War as a secondary adjunct to his domestic political aims." Davidson is not alone in his opinion. Doris Kearns, who served on Johnson's White House staff, wrote in her book *Lyndon Johnson and the American Dream* that when advised in 1965 that a plan similar to Davidson's would be needed to win, "Johnson recoiled from this dramatic display of presidential action . . . letting the country know that this was a major war . . . which would demand sacrifices on their part. . . . In deciding against his advisors . . . Johnson had asserted his intention to control the decision-making process."

Davidson charges LBJ "didn't want to get the American people into a patriotic furor over the war. If he did this, the people and Congress would insist that he do something to win the war, and there would go the Great Society." LBJ wished merely to preserve South Vietnam at the minimum short-term cost so as not to divert attention from his domestic programs. That is something to remember when

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we hear critics of President Bush claim that he is spending too much time on foreign policy, while neglecting domestic affairs.

Another major problem was that Defense Secretary McNamara and his civilian planners had adopted a "counter-insurgency" model that violated basic strategic principles. To Davidson, strategy implies that one "use one's strength against the enemy's weaknesses while negating the reverse; seize and hold the initiative." In Vietnam, the Pentagon was told to accept the enemy's style of protracted, small-scale war even though "realities dictated that the United States wage a short, savage war, using the maximum force necessary." The result was that Hanoi won a war fought on its terms.

Before the Gulf war, the United States was headed down this same road again under the rubric "low-intensity conflict." According to many think-tanks, the post-Cold War world was to be characterized by guerrilla warfare, terrorism, and other small-scale battles. The Pentagon was being urged to abandon its tanks and high-tech weapons and to make draconian cuts in manpower in favor of smaller, "light" units for fighting Third World foes. Since the real reason for this theory's political popularity was fiscal, it cannot even be considered an honest strategic error. The Gulf war demonstrated the need and the effectiveness of "heavy" combat units that could wage and win wars on America's terms. However, it remains to be seen whether these military results will change the budget plans of Defense Secretary Cheney, or of Congress.

Even taking Davidson's most pessimistic estimate of one million troops and several years to win in Vietnam according to his plan, "this price in American casualties, in United States dollars, in time and above all, in internal divisiveness would have been *far less* than the toll . . . exacted by the faulty strategy." The strategy of gradual escalation and "limited" war cycled some 2.5 million troops through Vietnam during a seven-year period at the cost of over fifty thousand American lives.

There are two important lessons to be learned from a comparison of the Vietnam War with the Gulf war: that it costs less to win a war than it does to lose one, and that it matters a great deal who sits in the White House as Commander-in-Chief.

William R. Hawkins is president of the Hamilton Center for National Strategy in Knoxville, Tennessee.

BRIEF MENTIONS

RONALD FIRBANK: THE COMPLETE SHORT STORIES
Edited by Steven Moore
Elmwood Park, Illinois: The Dalkey Archive Press; 170 pp., $19.95

Not only is the English novelist Ronald Firbank (1886-1926) no longer much read even by sophisticates, but the academic boomlet inspired by his work in the 1970's and 80's seems to have been deflated. There exist two biographies of Firbank, one by Miriam J. Benkovitz (Knopf, 1973) and one by Brigid Brophy (Macmillan, 1973), while New Directions has in print *Five Novels*. These novels — novellas really — are of varying degrees of excellence, but all of them, truly, *are* excellent. "A person who dislikes Ronald Firbank," said W.H. Auden, "may, for all I know, possess some admirable quality, but I do not wish ever to see him again."

The Complete Short Stories confirms Firbank as a master of what is called today "irreverence," combined with the pithy moral judgment based on a system of traditional values. (In 1907, Ronald Firbank was received into the Roman Catholic Church.) These fifteen *contes*, as their author called them, were written between 1903 and 1908; but, although apprentice work, they are (most of them) clever and original. Brilliant with an artificiality that they at once reflect and condemn, they are the product of an exquisitely aesthetic imagination that delights in revealing the vanity of the aesthetic imagination. Nearly all of the protagonists are women, from which one may guess that for Firbank the opposition between narcissistic aestheticism and spirituality is typically a feminine problem, although obviously it is one with which the author himself had a personal familiarity. Evelyn Waugh, born the year when the earliest of these stories was written, owed much of his formative development to Firbank's work, so much so that here, a bit uncannily, we find the seeds of *two* literary careers. ("A Study in Opal" reads like a clear prophesy of Waugh's greatest novel, A *Handful of Dust*.) Once Firbank had worked himself through what Steven Moore called his "effusions," or fanciful pieces, he was prepared for the rapier satire that, again like Waugh's, challenged the *haute-bourgeoisie* on its own terms, rather than from the greenery-yallery-Grosvenor Gallery plane: "'I am a work of art,' [Lady Georgia Blueharnis] sighed, 'and this evening I feel nearly as wicked as Herodias.'"

"It was one of Lady Georgia's habits to find equivalents for all her worser feelings in the Bible." ("A Tragedy in Green.")

—*Chilton Williamson, Jr.*

Wonders of the World

by Paul Hollander

Capturing the Culture: Film, Art, and Politics
by Richard Grenier
Washington, D.C.: Ethics & Public Policy Center; 392 pp., $24.95

◆

Who would have predicted that while socialist-realist art forms disappeared from most communist systems (even before the systems themselves collapsed), didactic and politicized movies and other products of mass culture would proliferate in the United States through the 1970's and 80's? Similar ironies can be found in regard to Marxist scholarship, which in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union is thoroughly discredited and outdated while remaining in vogue in American universities.

Not only was the politicization of the entertainment industries unexpected, it remains unremarked by the public at large. Yet fashionable left-liberal films, filled with tendentious political messages tailored to the specifications of a variety of social critics, continue to pour from the movie and television studios. Many of these films radiate aversion to existing American society, to capitalism, and to Western culture, although they suggest reverence for an idealized America that has never existed.

Like all socialist-realist art, these films

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blatantly misrepresent and invert reality. Yet, in a departure from Soviet style, the political message of American movies typically has not been ham-handedly didactic; instead, it has been introduced in the guise of the supposed verities of our time. The few films that deviate from this mold (such as *Hanoi Hilton*, *Red Dawn*, *Top Gun*) have been greeted with relentless scorn and hostility by critics objecting to their political content, not to their aesthetic shortcomings.

The gradual absorption of the New Left radicalism of the 1960's into the cultural mainstream of the 1970's and 1980's has been one of the adversary culture's greatest victories in the past quarter-century. Also, since the 1960's, the meaning of what is "political" has been greatly expanded to include, for example, certain sexual preferences. Richard Grenier is one of a handful of critics who have steadfastly observed and commented on these trends as they manifest themselves in contemporary American culture. His latest book is a rich collection of his critical writings, mostly but not exclusively dealing with American film. There are also pieces on a Havana Film Festival, on various art exhibits, on the PEN Club congress in New York, and on Broadway theater; a substantial introductory essay lucidly ties together the themes of the shorter pieces that follow.

Grenier defines his "central subject" as "the spiritual quest of the artistic class for a more meaningful world, and the estrangement of this class from the traditional values of its own society, which it finds unworthy . . . a class of people who have high opinions of themselves . . . but think the society from which they emerged contemptible." It may be historically unprecedented to find a concentration of social critics in the world of popular entertainment, but ours after all is the land of opportunity. One may surmise that many of these alienated individuals begin their careers aspiring to nothing loftier than making it to the top and making big bucks; it would indeed be interesting to trace the transformation of the Hollywood celebrity into the self-appointed conscience of his time. One explanation Grenier offers for this transformation is that "our society fails to satisfy the 'need to believe.'" While I thoroughly agree with this diagnosis, and have myself addressed the issue in its connection with literary and academic intellectuals, it seems more difficult to grasp why this malaise has made such headway among those in the entertainment industry—among, that is, people generally lacking in profundity and in intellectual or artistic distinction, people whose way of life is scarcely conducive to critical reflection. It is possible that the entertainment industry attracts a type of person more sentimental and guilt-ridden about his huge income than business and professional people in similar income brackets, and who finds solace and compensation in left-liberal political activism. There is also the historical factor—the popularity of leftist causes in Hollywood dating from the 1930's—although during the 30's, 40's, and 50's these attitudes found scant expression in Hollywood movies, which remained resolutely cheerful, apolitical, and often outright patriotic.

Grenier's talent for spotting and explaining political bias or deceptiveness is well-honed. Of the much-acclaimed *Gandhi*, he writes that the film "grotesquely distorts both Gandhi's life and character to the point that it is nothing more than a pious fraud." He recalls that "when Gandhi's wife lay dying of pneumonia and British doctors insisted that a shot of penicillin would save her, Gandhi refused to have this alien medicine injected into her body and simply let her die. (It must be noted that when Gandhi contracted malaria shortly afterward, he accepted for himself the alien medicine quinine, and that when he had appendicitis he allowed British doctors to perform on him the alien outrage of an appendectomy.)" While the movie dwelt on the oppressiveness of the British, it failed to show how, "As soon as the oppressive British were gone, the Indians—gentle, tolerant people that they are—gave themselves over to an orgy of bloodletting."

The makers of the movie *Reds* intended the audience to glean that, "If one has noble intentions, and means well toward one's fellow man, and one's heart is pure and generous and filled with love, then that is what matters. If one's ideas are unworkable, bring social disruption, disaster, and even tragedy on a colossal scale—one can't be expected to foresee all that, can one?" Of the numerous anti-CIA films, Grenier notes: "the trick, if one wants to make a movie showing American society as brutal and aggressive, is to concoct a story without the faintest hint of an adversary, revealing a tranquil, peaceful universe, in which we, only we, disturb the loving order of nature." By the same token, "The message of *E.T.* . . . is that except for us, it is a benign and cuddly universe. Gentle, loving E.T. . . . is treated roughly by a bunch of insensitive aggressive Americans, who think that everything outside their narrow world is dangerous."

We are also indebted to Grenier for having introduced the concept of "treason chic" in the wake of British movies about the lives of Guy Burgess, Donald Maclean, and Kim Philby. In the BBC television play "An Englishman Abroad," treason "seems to have been reduced to the level of minor misdemeanor, entirely forgivable as an upperclass peccadillo—at least if committed by a gentleman with verve and the right sort of tailor." In the recent Costa-Gavras film *Betrayed*, "The crowd wears KKK robes and sings 'Amazing Grace,' and we realize with horror that all of these elements together make up an American fascist front: the KKK, Nazis, Christianity, and American patriotism."

The PBS series *The Africans* leads him to ask: "Are you an admirer of Muammar Qaddafi? Are you looking forward to a world where Africans (from Africa) will be the new 'Brahmins' while Westerners are the new 'Untouchables'? . . . Do you believe that a person of even partly African

Warren Chappell

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ancestry can live in America 'for a thousand years' without becoming an American? In short, are you a vengeful black racist? Perhaps a masochistic white flagellant? If so look no further. I have found the impartial television show of your dreams."

But there is far more to these essays than fun at the expense of trendy political messages. Grenier's commentary helps us to confront and to understand better what Judge Robert Bork described in his introduction as, "One of the wonders of the modern world"; namely, the hostility of the intellectual and cultural elites of the Western democracies toward their own societies.

Paul Hollander is the author of Political Pilgrims, *among other books. His* Anti-Americanism: Critiques at Home and Abroad *will be published this year by Oxford University Press.*

You Never Know What the Day Will Bring

by J.O. Tate

Gringos
by Charles Portis
New York: Simon & Schuster;
269 pp., $18.95

◆

Charles Portis's fifth novel is of course a pleasure in its own right, but it's also an occasion—or should I say I am making it one—for reflecting on its author and his work, his style, his literary profile, the way he does things with words. I'd like to do that, because I don't think, in spite of his success, that Mr. Portis has entirely gotten his due, the recognition that he deserves as a writer.

As he shows once again in *Gringos*, Charles Portis is a deceptively laid-back performer. His narrator, Jimmy Burns, is so relaxed that we forget just how much is going on beneath the surface of his pages as we scan them. The ride is so absorbing for its incidental joys that we forget where we are going. We don't care. Later we realize that the journey was more .thoughtfully conducted than we ever knew. The nonchalance of the experience reflects the *sprezzatura* of the artist.

I suppose that Charles Portis's style and diction are not only personal accomplishments but are products of his Arkansas background. He seems to have advanced the tradition of southwestern or frontier humor as we have received it from Thorpe and Twain and Faulkner, and to have forged his own unique sound and subject matter. That tone of his, in *Norwood*, *The Dog of the South*, and *Gringos*, is a special blend compounded of cunning and naïveté, of rustic whimsy and contemporary cool, of first-person narrative and neurotic digression. There's an arbitrary, quirky readiness to leave the line of the tale, to pursue any point, to fuzz the focus, that is reminiscent of Eudora Welty's speaker in "Why I Live at the P.O." Portis's narrators are so often beset by con men, madmen, and cranks that their own hobbyhorses can sometimes confuse our perspective. Yet their stories have the compelling force of that of the Ancient Mariner.

Gringos is about Americans in Mexico, where no amount of craziness can erase our sense of the presence of the past. Portis catches with effortless accuracy the surreal world that juxtaposes a garbage dump here with a pre-Colombian temple there. The overlay of Hispanic culture reminds me that the picaresque, on-the-road quality of Portis's novels is beautifully affirmed in *Gringos*, some of whose characters remind me of Don Quixote, and one or two of Sancho Panza.

The overwhelming background of Mexico—the Catholic, the pagan, the Spanish, and the Indian cultures—assert themselves even as various gringos and locals attempt to exploit them or trash them or steal them or subvert them, or even penetrate their mysteries. Jimmy Burns, a lost soul who hauls junk and locates missing persons, sets out to find one and winds up saving another—not for money. There's a hint at a kind of grace, a marriage, a new dispensation, one embedded in a tale of idols and dwarfs and witches and ritual sacrifices, as well as little men from flying saucers who must exist (mustn't they?) to explain all those Mayan ruins.

It is Refugio, the Sancho character, who declares, "You never know what the day will bring," which may be true outside Mexico and outside a novel by Charles Portis, but is certainly the rule within those entities. Let's say that the fictional Mexico is a Portisland, and leave it at that. Ironies abound. "Things had turned around, and now it was the palefaces who were being taken in with beads and trinkets." "You never know what you'll run into in Mexico, John Knox in a guayabera shirt, or a rain of tadpoles in the desert, or a strangely empty plaza in the heart of a teeming city with not even a bird to be seen." Portisland, if not Mexico, is a place where anything can happen, and does.

But in a novel by Charles Portis, what happens next sneaks up on the reader, who is so busy listening to what the narrator says that he neglects to watch out for big surprises. When one woman challenges Jimmy Burns with, "'You're afraid of smart women, aren't you?'" his internal comment steals the show:

> She had used this ploy before, having heard via the female bush telegraph that it was unanswerable. She was right though. I was leery of them. Art and Mike said taking an intellectual woman into your home was like taking in a baby raccoon. They were both amusing for awhile but soon became randomly vicious and learned how to open the refrigerator.

By an idiosyncratic art of combination, Portis has honed a style so beguiling that his books are consumed for the sheer pleasure of their discourse, rather than for the resolution of suspense. The man has style.

So Jimmy Burns speaks in a knowing, rueful, and flexible way that we have heard before and would know anywhere. He seems to be superficial but is shrewd; he seems to be anti-intellectual, but reveals knowledge of history and evidence of thoughtfulness. His good humor and openness are appealing, but they have their limits. I like what he says about UFO literature: "Still, the flying saucer books were fun to read and there weren't nearly enough of them to suit me. I liked the belligerent ones best, that took no crap off the science establishment." I relished also

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his description of Mott, a minor gringo:

> Mott always looked sprightly and pleased with himself, like Harry Truman at the piano, with his rimless glasses and neatly combed hair. He had gone crazy in the army and now received a check each month, having been declared fifty percent psychologically disabled. Had they determined him to be half crazy all the time or full crazy half the time? Mott said the VA doctors never would spell it out for him. He had whatever the opposite of paranoia is called. He thought everybody liked him and took a deep personal interest in his welfare. But then everybody did like him.

Stuff like that, of course, cannot always distract us from the progression of plot, or from learning why "'The password tonight is L.C. Smith.'" The bumpy ride of *Gringos* proves that Charles Portis has still got what it takes, and that down-home thoughts about food suggest something too about the enjoyment of novels: "Mashed potatoes are the better for a few lumps, in my opinion, and gravy too for that matter."

J.O. Tate is a professor of English at Dowling College on Long Island.

On the Way Home

by Gregory McNamee

Querencia
by Stephen Bodio
Livingston, Montana: Clark City Press; 154 pp., $12.95

◆

The literary map of New Mexico includes the names of many well-known writers. To the north, in the heavily publicized vicinity of Santa Fe and Taos, are Rudolfo Anaya, John Nichols, Haniel Long, Erna Fergusson, Mary Austin, Paul Horgan. Dotting the redrock canyons and high mesas of the west are a roster of Native Americans: Leslie Marmon Silko, Simon Ortiz, N. Scott Momaday, Luci Tapahonso. To the south, in the dusty Tularosa Valley where Billy the Kid made his way into history, lies the territory of Eugene Manlove Rhodes. Nearby, one finds Ross Calvin and, every now and again, Larry McMurtry.

The map is pitch-black with ink everywhere but the section marking the high grasslands to the north of the Black Mountains, between Socorro and Springerville on the Arizona line. This stretch of west-central New Mexico is fine, mile-plus-high, lonesome country, visited by archivists of the Farm Security Administration in the 1930's and by astronomers from around the world today, who come by to check in on the so-called Very Large Array of radio telescopes (featured in the film *2010*) near the hamlet of Magdalena. Apart from the occasional hunter and a few

BRIEF MENTIONS

INDIA: A MILLION MUTINIES NOW
by V.S. Naipaul
New York: Viking Penguin; 521 pp., $24.95

The gifted Naipaul brothers descended from migrant workers who a century ago were part of a flood of immigrants arriving from India in the lower Caribbean, notably Trinidad and what was then "B.G.," or British Guyana. The elder brother—V.S., as he is locally known—has shown unrivaled critical insight into these enclaves; the younger, Shiva, died a few years ago, leaving us *A Hot Country*, the finest West Indian novella ever written. V.S. has now been deservedly knighted, but says he refuses to use the title.

When V.S. Naipaul returns to the land of his fathers, he finds himself immediately immersed in a vast, fragmented continent, with its deities, splinter religions, sects, sub-sects, shrines, cults, castes, and contradictions (the Marxist-Leninist faction of the Communist Party of India was split into 20 groupings by 1973). A group of "Maoists" ape the stars of Tamil cinema. A purveyor of burnt cow-dung cures relishes American commercial fiction. A scientist observes dietary prohibitions, a doctor regulates his behavior according to astrological "laws." A man who once lived under a rooftop water tank has risen in life to become a film writer. A Brahmin publicity girl must submit to the strictures of her clan, such as that menstruating women are pollutant at 15 feet and that pipe water corrupts female morals. The editress of a new women's magazine proffers advice on how to behave during the humiliating "bride-seeing" visits.

These are the "million mutinies" of the book's subtitle, rebellions against "life lived at an extremity." Naipaul has done an amazing amount of legwork, particularly in Bombay, Goa, Bangalore, Madras, Delhi, and Calcutta. Incredible Calcutta, where corpses lie abandoned on sidewalks and buzzards perch on the ledges of hotel windows, gives Naipaul "the feel of an abandoned Belgian settlement in central Africa in the 1960's, after Africans had moved in and camped." Unfortunately, some of the people whom Naipaul has interviewed (often with the help of a translator) are considerably less interesting than others. And it is difficult to reconcile the instances of a rabid endemic violence with Naipaul's vision of a new India made finally whole.

In summary, Naipaul writes: "It was what I felt—in a lesser or different way—about my own Indian family background in far-off Trinidad. I felt that the physical conditions of our life, often poor conditions, told only half the story: that the remnants of the old civilization we possessed gave the in-between colonial generations a second scheme of reverences and ambitions, and that this equipped us for the outside world better than might have seemed likely." And: "The very multiplicity of Indian castes and communities made for some kind of balance."

This is very fine. The "multiplicity" he speaks of is religious, and religion here permeates life lived at an extremity, giving Indian culture the confidence of its dignity, against the parvenu colonial (not excluding the communist) one. Also, multiplicity helps explain the remarkable affinity and affection upper-class English felt for India, *e.g.*, Kipling and Forster whose Aziz, in the last pages of *A Passage to India*, nevertheless shouts after taking note of that country's various sects, "Hurrah for India!" Ironically, and despite the violence, V.S.'s splendid book echoes that cry. Sectarian excess has so disgusted the sectarians themselves that "there was in India now what didn't exist 200 years before: a central will, a central intellect, a national idea."

—Geoffrey Wagner

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scattered ranch families, the area doesn't see much in the way of human beings.

In the late 1970's, Stephen Bodio, a Boston-based writer, amateur naturalist, and falconer, happened into Magdalena on the way somewhere else. He never left. With his friend Betsy Huntington, and an assortment of birds, dogs, snakes, and books, he took up residence in a ramshackle two-story house along U.S. 60 and set out to live in the way of country people. *Querencia*—the Spanish term means something like "the tiny pocket of one's inner life where one is truly at home"—details a decade of life on the plains of San Agustín, a hitherto unchronicled land.

Initially suspicious of the newcomers, as highlanders will be, the people of Magdalena and the surrounding plains opened to Stephen and Betsy as soon as it became apparent that they were neither anthropologists studying a bizarre foreign culture nor afraid of honest work—building fences, mending cattle tanks, slaughtering pigs ("The only thing that bothered me was how the other pigs watch," Betsy admits), tending to farm animals, hunting game. Throughout the early pages of his memoir, Stephen finds himself tested by the locals for his knowledge of raptor birds, of snakes, of dogs. When he begins to pass the tests easily, his transformation is complete, earning him a distinguished seat at the Silver Spur saloon, a home, a place in the heart.

Querencia offers a fine brief on rural living, alternately reveling in country matters and acknowledging the difficulties involved in such exercises as luring cows home from the mountain wilderness into which they've strayed while steering clear of venomous reptiles and combative bull elk. But this is no back-to-the-land paean. Bodio's eyes are wide open:

> Had we any lingering romanticism it would have been cured by circumstances; in those years our combined annual income would not exceed $12,000, and an ancient house on a remote plateau exacts its toll in colds and unpaid bills, in unrepaired machinery and teeth and animals. Still, we believed with our neighbors that our *querencia* held some parts of a real life worth living, full of good and gritty things that coastal civilization attempted to deny, ignore, or paper over. We decided, not for the first or last time, that this was the place.

Hardships abound in the highlands, and not only of the mere character-building sort. *Querencia* is in the end tragic—to say why would be to rob the book of its strongest moments—but it is equally celebratory of lives spent well in the reality of juniper-scented wind, lightning bursts, and good hot chili, lives free of bosses and bureaucrats. In the end, one cannot help but admire Stephen Bodio and Betsy Huntington for having indeed had the rare fortune of finding, in the middle of their personal toils and this churned-up civilization of ours, a peaceful center.

Gregory McNamee is a freelance author, critic, and poet in Tucson, Arizona.

Sequins, Studs, Beads, and All

by Janet Scott Barlow

I Am Elvis:
A Guide to Elvis Impersonators
Edited by Marie Cahill
New York: Pocket Books;
128 pp., $8.95

◆

Among those interesting but not exactly timeless questions Americans have the luxury of asking themselves, one of the most persistent is, "What was the meaning of Elvis?" The most astonishing answer to that question I have ever read came from Dave Marsh, the relentlessly serious rock critic who found parallels between Presley and Abraham Lincoln (each "had a unique ability to personalize his moment in history"), thereby demonstrating that only in the world of pop-culture analysis could two American icons simultaneously be reduced to absurdity by the act of comparing them.

Rock critics need no help in going off the deep end, but in the case of Elvis, they may only be following fans, many of whom have already taken the plunge. It says something about both the phenomenon of Elvis Presley and the nature of American marketing that there is now available a book called *I Am Elvis: A Guide to Elvis Impersonators*. The urge is to ask, "a guide for *whom*?" but the answer is obvious enough: this is a book for Elvis fanatics about the subject of Elvis fanatics. The marketing of Elvis Presley has finally lapped itself, starting with books that explored every aspect of his life and ending with "guides" of those who are obsessed with every aspect of his life. In what must be a unique case of pop-culture cannibalism, the audience for the Presley product has become its own product, Elvis consumers having moved from consuming Elvis to consuming themselves as consumers of Elvis. Fourteen years dead, Elvis is everywhere, and it all calls to mind that country song, "How Can I Miss You When You Won't Go Away?"

To be "guided" through the world of Elvis impersonators (complete with listings of height, weight, and astrological signs) is, at times, to make stops one might rather skip. The only statistical consistencies among this group are 1) the majority come from the Midwest, especially Ohio, making the Buckeye State an apparent hotbed of Elvis wannabes, and 2) the jumpsuits of most apprentice impersonators are sewn—sequins, studs, beads, and all—by their mothers. But beyond sewing mothers and Midwestern roots, "being" Elvis is anybody's ball game, and that includes professional poodle groomers, small-town mayors, and actors who "become" Elvis through strict adherence to "Stanislavsky's Method Acting."

The game sometimes gets so strange that it seems simply a kindness to leave unexamined all those who see visions of Elvis, hear his voice from Beyond, pray to him before performing, or want to meet him even though they know that's "impossible now." It's also best, I think, not to dwell too long on the pharmacist-Elvis who, "if money were no object," would have plastic surgery to look more like the King, the ex-car salesman who *did* have plastic surgery to look more like the King, and Janice K., a/k/a "The Lady Elvis," who first became Elvisized when a "high school

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drama teacher cast her as an intergalactic female Elvis on a planet ruled by women" and subsequently has seen the singed image of Elvis on her kitchen window screen.

Less "preoccupied" and therefore more intriguing is auctioneer Mike Albert, a Virgo from Ohio and a former winner of the Elvis Olympics who—let us imagine this—can "do an entire auction as Elvis." Strange but true also is Nazar "The Singing Doctor" Sayegh, an anesthesiologist and touring Elvis impersonator. "As he wheels his patients to the recovery room," we are told, the doctor "softly sings them an Elvis song." I look at it this way: it can't hurt, and it's certainly better, post-operatively speaking, than being sung a Billy Idol song.

Many Elvis impersonators, it turns out, are holders of odd but unchallengeable Elvis-impersonator records. Rick Marino, for instance, performed in "The Elvis, Elvis, Elvis Show" at the Kookilkwan Show Room in Inchon, South Korea, making him "the first American act not associated with the military to ever work in a Korean place of business." And Dave Carlson, a "recent inductee into the Elvis Presley International Impersonators Association Hall of Fame," is the only Elvis impersonator who conducts seminars on "the art of impersonating the King of Rock and Roll." This Hall of Famer's artistic advice to budding Elvisites: "I can't grab a person's leg and say, 'Here, move your leg like this.' Most of it has to come from the individual." 'Tis ever true of art.

At different ends of the I-am-Elvis spectrum are one fellow who simply goes through life dressed as the King, hoping one day to become a "professional" Elvis, and another fellow who was inspired to impersonate Elvis not by Elvis himself but by the act of another Elvis impersonator, and whose desire now is to marry whoever would impersonate Ann-Margaret in the inevitable remake of the *real* Elvis's unforgettable film, *Viva Las Vegas*. It all cries out for some sort of psychological interpretation, though I'm not sure I'd like to know what it is. In any case, the most likely source of such interpretation in *I Am Elvis*, a bearded and balding Elvis impersonator who writes "books about psychotherapy," has nothing to say about the psychological implications of Elvisness. In fact, he has nothing to say about how a bearded and balding writer goes about impersonating Elvis Presley. He does reveal, however, that his "most memorable performance was at a Texaco Eat-In in Lampasas, Texas," adding, perhaps redundantly, "I've been complimented in all kinds of places for my singing."

The most interesting of all Elvis impersonators are those whose point is that they *aren't* Elvis. Clarence "Black Elvis" Giddens asked, "What? A black Elvis?" when a friend suggested he perform professionally, and it's impossible to argue with the friend's response: "Why not?" And then there is El Vez, "The Mexican Elvis," complete with a jumpsuit bearing "a sequined Virgin of Guadalupe on the back," not to mention "a matching sombrero." (No sewing mothers for El Vez. His stage clothes are custom-made, but he "does all the stud work himself.") El Vez performs literal Spanish translations of Elvis standards, including that classic about rock and roll footwear, "Huaraches Azul." His pre-performance ritual involves not prayers to Elvis but "a shot of tequila," and he is backed up on stage by the Elvettes—Gladysita, Priscilita, Lisa Marie, and Que Linda Thompson—and accompanied by the Memphis Mariachi Band. El Vez's plans focus on an event to be called "El Gran Combo de El Vez—a mixture of a Las Vegas show and a Mexican Ballet Folklorico," a blend of salsa and rockabilly that would fuel a "show/opera recounting the history of Mexico through Elvis songs."

The history of Mexico through Elvis songs. To consider such a spectacle (and me, I'd pay to see it) is to be brought back to the original question: what was the meaning of Elvis? For that matter, what is the meaning of Elvis impersonators? After looking through *I Am Elvis*, my conclusion on both counts is: Beats me, but there it is. As one Elvis impersonator, a Leo from East Peoria, Illinois, said after his first public Elvis performance as the King, "I thought it would be a flop, but my peers loved it, and the rest, as they say, is history, or the future, depending on how you look at it." Precisely. In the meantime, all I know for sure is that there will never be a book called *I Am Abe: A Guide to Lincoln Impersonators*.

Janet Scott Barlow covers popular culture from Cincinnati.

BRIEF MENTIONS

ISAAC AND HIS DEVILS
by Fernanda Eberstadt
New York: Alfred A. Knopf; 338 pp., $22.00

Isaac Hooker, half-blind from nearsightedness, a little deaf, and far too intelligent for a happy adolescence, lumbers through Fernanda Eberstadt's second novel with the painful desperation of an overintellectual misfit trying to break out of middle-class, small-town New Hampshire. Eberstadt is a skilled writer and her first novel, *Low Tide*, was moving even where slightly overwritten; in *Isaac* she has the same partial success with metaphor: some fit in to a scene seamlessly, but others do not. There is nothing sloppy or unfocused about her work; like her hero Isaac, when Eberstadt fails it is from trying too hard.

There is much to recommend the novel. The characters are well drawn and, however selfish, very appealing: Isaac's father Sam, too self-consciously ambitious to make more of himself than a high-school teacher; Isaac's vigorous, unintellectual, and unforgiving mother Mattie; his little brother Turner, who wants to blend in where Isaac sticks out and to take care of a family with which Isaac has always been at war. In both Eberstadt's books plot plays second fiddle to analysis of character, and that is especially true of *Isaac*; those who read novels for the story will not find much of one here. But the poignancy of this somewhat monstrous protagonist is undeniable, and those many passages where Eberstadt's risk-taking pays off bode well for a third book.

—*Jack Ramsay*

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Letter From the Lower Right

by John Shelton Reed

Man's Best Friend and Other Brutes

◆

Highbrows like *Chronicles* readers may not know a television program called *America's Funniest Home Videos*, but it's just exactly what it sounds like. A story in *Newsweek* last year reported that the program's staff were surprised to discover regional differences in the tapes that viewers send in. According to a man who screens submissions, the Midwest's FHVs are usually episodes from family life and California's tend to involve "far-out stunts," but Southerners, he said, produce endless footage of "bizarre guys sitting around drinking beer while trying to produce a video." This man singled out one Southern tape for special mention: it showed "a small, stick-wielding child fruitlessly pursuing a frog around a yard as an off-camera voice kept shouting, 'Git it! Git it!'"

Well, I hate to say it, but that sounds about right.

Southerners do seem more likely than other Americans to believe that frogs and other critters have been put here to amuse or otherwise to serve us. I guess I'm a case in point. Not long ago a letter-writer charged me with a pattern of insensitivity to animal rights, and I'm guilty. I have often written with indifference and even with approval about blood sports, the eating of red meat, and other activities detrimental to the welfare of individual beasts. Moreover, I have made fun of animal-rights zealots—partly because they're zealots, but there's more to it than that. I'm afraid I'm being typical.

"Egg-suckin' dog," Johnny Cash sings, "I'm gonna stomp your head in the ground." In what other region does casual violence against animals figure in popular music? No doubt you've seen the bumper stickers that say "I [heart] NEW YORK," or "CHAPEL HILL," or "[picture of a golden retriever]." Maybe you've also seen the ones that say "I [spade] MY CAT." But only in the South have I seen "I [club] BABY SEALS." There are parts of the country where it wouldn't be safe to make that joke.

The entry on "pets" in the *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture* states it simply as a fact that Southerners are "less likely [than other Americans] to express concern about the right or wrong treatment of animals or to strongly oppose exploitation or cruelty toward animals."

That entry was written by Margaret Young, a sociologist who studies interaction between humans and animals. Dr. Young teaches in a veterinary school, and she's also a professional dog trainer. She does a good deal of outside work these days as an expert witness in court cases where people have lost hands or children to killer dogs. She says that Southerners are less likely to get in this sort of trouble, because we're less likely to forget that dogs are dogs and don't think like us. That is, we're less likely to confuse them with human beings.

You could say we have more respect for their doghood; we believe that dogs should and will do doggy things, that they have their own part to play in this world, and maybe the next—a part different from ours, complementary, and, yes, subordinate. Dr. Young says Southerners are "more likely to express concern for the practical and material value of animals or their habitat"—that is, for their *use* to us.

I'm not a hunter (although I've hunted), but some of my friends and relations are mighty huntsmen, especially of doves and deer, which I'm happy to help them eat. It's important to them to eat what they kill, because—this is significant—it's a form of respect for the animal. These fellows don't get theological about it, but some of them could. The most prophetic Southern voice of our time, that of Wendell Berry, has had some fine things to say about the biblical theme of stewardship, which licenses the use of God's property, but insists that we care for it, too.

If you don't understand the hunter's ethic, and don't have someone around to explain it to you, watch for a book coming out soon from Princeton University Press by Stuart Marks, an anthropologist and hunter who spent years in Scotland County, North Carolina, studying hunters of deer, duck, coon, quail, and so forth. Each group turns out to be almost a separate tribe, with its own folkways and initiation rites, and it's weird and wonderful to see them treated by someone whose previous book was about African lion-hunters.

But getting back to my friends: if you tell one of these guys that a deer has rights, he'll laugh at you. Ask him how he'd feel if he were a deer and he'll explain patiently that he's not. Tell him that he and the deer are one and he might get angry. But suggest that habitat preservation or a lower bag limit this year means better hunting next year, and he'll listen intently. There is a mutual dependence here, although it's not based on identity or even equality.

The same is true for domestic animals. Margaret Young observes that Southerners are more likely than other Americans to expect household animals to work, to earn their keep. They are subordinate, but their work complements ours and contributes to the common wealth. Horse and rider, hunter and dog, mule and farmer: these symbiotic pairings are rooted deep in the collective memory.

Obviously, Southerners can *like* animals. Old Blue is a legendary good old dog. Old Shep even got himself sung about by Elvis. Another singer has made a song of his daddy's request to his mama to "wake me up early, be good to my dogs, and teach my children to pray."

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But we value animals as individuals, not generically, and we value them for what they do for us. Dr. Young believes, for instance, that Southerners are relatively more likely to judge dogs on their performance rather than their breeding. Johnny Cash doesn't seem to care about the pedigree of his egg-sucking hound, and in "The Bear" Faulkner celebrates the bravery of a little mixed-breed dog, a "fice." (Is "fice" the origin of "feisty," I wonder?)

A life of loyal service can elicit genuine affection. Dr. Young writes that, "while expressing indifference or incredulity toward the idea of 'loving' animals, many Southerners form strong affectional attachments to individual animals." These attachments, though based on usefulness, can outlive it. ("Once unable to work, [working dogs] still retain a special status within the household.") But even the best good old dog may not get in the house. ("The key elements of companion animal status are frequently fulfilled without inside residence for the animal.") We may address our dogs as fondly as our children, in other words, but we don't say the same things to them. They're *animals*, after all, and Southern pets know their place.

Look, Southerners have always drawn sharp lines between categories. All traditional cultures do. Black and white, male and female, saved and unsaved, Southerner and Yankee, "quality" and trash, human and beast —we've insisted on these distinctions, God-given or otherwise. We've even gloried in them. We've tempered our boundary-drawing with a pervasive particularism that recognizes considerable variation within categories, but we haven't been comfortable with ambiguity.

Obviously we've overdone it sometimes. Learning to live with fuzzy and ambiguous distinctions is what cultural modernization is all about. That's probably inevitable, in many respects even desirable, and it's certainly well underway in the South. But Richard Weaver was voicing an ancient Southern suspicion when he wrote in "Life Without Prejudice" that hostility to society's distinctions often masks hostility to society itself, that confusion of roles and loss of differentiation is exactly the meaning of societal collapse. We need to take those warnings to heart, and to insist on necessary distinctions when they are in fact necessary.

If my description of the place of pets in the Southern household sounds like *Driving Miss Daisy*, it's no accident. Just as racial paternalism is gone with the wind, so in time Southerners may come to believe that animals don't exist primarily in relation to us. Hell, our evolving cosmic consciousness may lead us to understand the essential oneness of Being, as we say in California. We may come to view "Old Shep" as this century's "Old Black Joe." But that time isn't yet. And if that analogy offends you, you must agree.

Some of John Shelton Reed's best friends are animals. In fact, he recently had a baby donkey named after him. Donkey John S. Reed (J.R. for short) and mother Peaches are both doing well.

Letter From Paris

by Curtis Cate

There's No Stopping Progress

◆

The recent war in the Persian Gulf has at least had the merit of dissipating one or two myths, even if it has also helped to generate new mirages.

One of the most pernicious of these myths was the belief, shared by France's former defense minister, Jean-Pierre Chevènement, and other members of the Franco-Iraqi Friendship Association of which he was the vice-president, that Saddam Hussein's Iraq was a truly "progressive" country. Not only because Saddam Hussein and his valiant countrymen were protecting other Arab countries from being overrun by the fanatical Islamic hordes of Ayatollah Khomeini's Iran, but because — as anyone who visited Baghdad could see with his or her own eyes — in Iraq women were no longer veiled.

This particular myth was splendidly punctured last February in a devastating article written for *Le Figaro* by one of its correspondents, Patrick de Saint-Exupéry. After ten days in Iraq, during which he kept his eyes as well as his ears fully open, he was flabbergasted by the astonishing backwardness of the country beyond the suburbs of Baghdad. Notwithstanding their sun-blessed (or sun-cursed) land's enormous natural advantage in being irrigated by two important rivers, the Tigris and the Euphrates, the Iraqis, he discovered, were "a poor people, so poor that nearby Jordan, bereft of all resources, appears rich and opulent in comparison."

> Most of the fertile lands are fallow. An agricultural plan was indeed launched in 1975, but it remained a dead letter and was put into effect only after the start of the embargo. Today the irrigation canals, most of them dug since August 2, have remained in the blueprint stage and lead nowhere. Here and there greenhouse plantations rise from the level plain, but the furrows left by plows are virtually nonexistent. In villages far removed from the display-window city of Baghdad there is still no running water or electricity. The highway alone is tarred; most of the alleyways and even the streets are stinking mud-holes bordered by rustic houses.
>
> While visiting a cheap apartment block, "built by the government" near the oil depots of Nassiriyah . . . one thing leapt to the eye: the houses had been built next to a pestilential salty marsh, and it required real effort to imagine anyone being able to live there.

Even in Baghdad he was amazed by the wretchedness of ordinary habitations once he left the areas dominated by ultramodern hotels, ministries, and luxurious apartment buildings. Invited by a friendly official from the Ministry of Information to share a cup of coffee in his home, Saint-Exupéry was appalled by the leprous state of the walls, by the rickety condition of the furniture, only fifteen years old, and dumbfounded to find that the kitchen, though it had a refrigerator, contained no stove but only a small Butagaz burner.

Today, thanks to the blaze of publicity suddenly focused on Iraq, we know the reason for this poverty and squalor. Saddam Hussein's Iraq was little more

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than a huge, 20th-century Potemkin village (Baghdad), glitteringly erected to dazzle foreign eyes and to conceal the extent to which the country's resources were being taxed and strained to support an extravagantly large and costly war machine.

The second alluring myth, to which so many French businessmen succumbed, was the belief that because of its vast wealth — 15 percent or more of the world's known oil reserves — Iraq was an "ideal" business partner, one that was scrupulously correct in honoring its contracts, punctually paying, as the French picturesquely put it, *rubis sur l'ongle* — like a ruby on the nail, or, translated into the rougher language of our cowboy West, cash on the barrel.

For years, prior to the invasion of Kuwait, the French public had been vaguely aware that Iraq was a kind of El Dorado for French businessmen, engineers, and, of course, weapons manufacturers. But it was not until last autumn and even more this spring that certain Paris weeklies began to reveal the crazy extremes to which this Iraqophilia had been carried. Thus it was the Spie-Batignolles firm that built Baghdad's brand-new airport, Bouygues (the world's largest reinforced-concrete construction company) that erected Saddam Hussein's neo-Babylonian palace, Dumez that built barracks for the Iraqi army; just as it was a team of French engineers and technicians who built the nuclear plant at Tammouz, in the suburbs of Baghdad — which the nervous Israelis reduced to rubble in a bombing raid staged in 1982. It was also a French firm, Protec, based in Alsace and working hand in glove with two German concerns, Karl Kolb and Wet, that helped to supply Iraq with chemicals for "pesticides," easily diverted for the manufacture of toxic gases.

During 1989 alone — that is to say after the conclusion of the "heroically defensive" war against Iran, which justified massive military support — the Soviet Union, West Germany, and France are estimated to have furnished Saddam Hussein's Iraq with 15 billion dollars' worth of arms — and this at a time when Iraq was already staggering under an international debt of close to 80 billion dollars. If George Bernard Shaw had lived long enough to witness these developments, he could have stroked his patriarchal beard and chuckled, "Reread *Major Barbara*." Seldom in modern times have the Undershafts of this world had it so good! At any rate in appearance. For once France's governmental underwriters began to peel away the layers of euphoric camouflage enveloping these matters, they discovered the bitter truth: Saddam Hussein's "progressive" and "scrupulously punctual" Iraq had long since ceased paying cash on the petroleum barrel. Payments for delivered goods and services were no longer being made on time or even at all, with the result that French firms were having to apply for compensation from the French State's official credit-insuring agency (the so-called COFACE). The total loss in poorly honored contracts has been reckoned at 29 billion francs — not far from six billion dollars, at an exchange rate of five francs to the dollar. Once again, French taxpayers will have to pay the bill for these financial follies.

The third myth, like Johnny Walker, has yet to stumble and fall on its face. This is the appealing notion that the war in the Gulf was essentially fought to establish what George Bush somewhat rashly called a "New World Order" — the latest in a series of neo-Utopian prescriptions (Roosevelt's "New Deal," Kennedy's "New Frontier," Lyndon Johnson's "Great Society") to which American Presidents seem incurably addicted. Because they are socialists and members of a party that, like the Labour Party in Britain, has had a long and intellectually compelling pacifist tradition, both President Mitterrand and Foreign Minister Roland Dumas were more than happy to embrace this planetary program, since the idea that international law could not be flouted with impunity and that naked aggression practiced by the strong against the weak *had* to be punished provided France with a valuable moral basis for its support of the United States and, more specifically, of George Bush, who, like Ronald Reagan before him, is regarded with instinctive suspicion by many French left-wingers. This was particularly important for Mitterrand and Dumas, given the strong ideological aversion felt by many French socialists for a war that was going to be fought (and which was eventually fought) to protect capitalistic and, in particular, American petroleum interests in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf. Nothing, in the eyes of such anticapitalistic diehards, could seem more iniquitous than a war "fought for petroleum."

The simple fact of the matter, however, is that the recent war was not primarily fought for petroleum. One of the first to point this out, within days of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, was Franz-Olivier Giesbert, the able managing editor of *Le Figaro* and, incidentally, the author of what is probably the most devastating analysis in book form of François Mitterrand's nine-year reign. What was basically at issue in the Gulf conflict and what made it so serious, Giesbert pointed out, was that Saddam Hussein was well on his way to developing atomic weapons. No amount of pacifist hand-wringing or vociferations could alter this ominous reality.

This lucid appraisal was fully borne out by subsequent events. If the underlying issue had simply been a moral one (defending the weak against the strong), or one of keeping Iraq's dictator from sitting on top of 35 percent of the world's known oil reserves, economic sanctions and an embargo would probably have sufficed to bring him slowly to heel, and a war could have been avoided. But the stark reality was that the world did not have that much time, and that meanwhile the atomic clock was ominously ticking.

The basic issue was admirably summed up last February by another best-selling author and a dedicated myth-buster, the TV commentator François de Closets. This is what he had to say in an article published in the left-wing (and often stridently anti-Bush) weekly, *L'Evénement du Jeudi*:

> A nuclear war was brewing in the Middle East; it would have become inevitable if the West did not, no matter what it cost, undertake to defuse this atomic bomb.
>
> These particular conditions did not exist when the Chinese invaded Tibet, when the Red Army penetrated into Afghanistan, or when Syria intervened in Lebanon. They are the ones that played a determining role in the

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evolution of the crisis. For the Americans, the annexation of Kuwait offered an opportunity to destroy the power of Iraq before the Israelis did it with atomic bombs.

It would be difficult, I think, to formulate a more succinct and penetrating résumé of the basic issue involved: not one of fighting for oil, but of forestalling a desperate resort to atomic weapons. In this respect the recent Gulf war differs radically from the other wars in which the United States has been involved—in Korea and Vietnam, and in the brief campaigns conducted in Santo Domingo (under Johnson), Grenada, and Panama.

In George Bernard Shaw's day the Undershafts of this world were already a troubling lot; today, they have become an international problem, and indeed a menace. *"On n'arrête pas le progrès"* (there's no stopping progress), the ironic phrase has it, and the same goes for science. As Alexandre de Marenches, the former head of France's secret intelligence agency, pointed out during a televised round-table discussion last January: "The miniaturization of atomic bombs has long since begun, and it is going to pose an increasingly grave problem for the responsible governments in the world to keep crackpot dictators from laying their hands on such destructive weapons for blackmail, terrorism, or other aggressive purposes."

Much as one may regret it, the fact remains that the world is steadily shrinking. The planet—as Jean-François Revel pointed out in his most recent book, *La Connaissance inutile* ("useless" in the sense of "thwarted" knowledge)—is now bound from one pole to the other by an increasingly dense network of communications and international standards, particularly in the fields of economics, mathematics, and the "exact" sciences, which have "objective" validity—in the sense that rulers who reject these standards, in the name of "cultural identity" or "ethnocentric values," inevitably condemn their subjects to varying degrees of backwardness, poverty, and state-sponsored stupidity. A facile piece of rhetoric though it is, the alternative to George Bush's New International Order is almost certain to be a New International Disorder, and on an ever more dangerous scale for the future of the human race.

Nietzsche, for once, was being overly optimistic when he spoke of *die fröhliche Wissenschaft—le gai savoir*, "cheerful knowledge." Baudelaire, no friend of progress, may have been closer to the truth in referring to knowledge as "bitter"—*"amer savoir"* (in his famous poem, *Le Voyage*)—and to the world as *"monotone et petit."* Monotonous the contemporary world certainly is not, but small, alas, it has most definitely become.

Curtis Cate, a biographer and historian, has lived for many years in Paris.

Letter From South Carolina

by William Baldwin

The Art of Turnip Truckdom

◆

I'll take my stand. There are a lot of topics around—collapsing savings and loans, collapsing universes, donkey basketball—on which I have skillfully walked the rail or else mumbled "no comment" while hiding my face behind a raised lapel. There is one subject, though, that I'm willing to stand up and be counted on. I like folk art. Correction. It's officially called "outsider art" now, but I like it all the same and so do a lot of other red-blooded Americans. I seem to remember Dwight Eisenhower chuckling the praises of Grandma Moses, a saintly woman whose life and art were relatively typical (or used to be) of the genre. She started painting late in life and was self-taught. She had no sense of perspective, used bright colors, and celebrated a nostalgic or naïve or at least pleasant view of her surroundings.

I realize such generalizations are dangerous, but I'm taking my stand so I'll live dangerously. Grandma Moses was a typical folk artist (or used to be? maybe? many say? for her time?). Times change, of course. I still like Ike and assume most other people do too, but folk art is no longer a matter to be left in the hands of benign Sunday painter Presidents. It's big business, and it's social statement, and still some of it's being painted right down the road by elderly grandparents. The medium is the message, and the message is . . . well.

My wife and I live in a small Southern rural town, and we grew up knowing personally a half-dozen such artists. Their paintings were the butt of some familiar jokes—as in the blazing sunset that was interpreted, "My God! Aunt May, you've painted the bomb!" But by and large this body of work of not-quite-right sailboats, magnolia blossoms, and whatever was praised, appreciated, and hung on the wall. It was the product of people who were known and loved—*i.e.*, folks.

My wife and I didn't just fall off the turnip truck. We've been riding along on it now for a goodly number of years, knee deep in turnips, and peering out through the slats at a world we didn't make and have no desire to remake. Still and all, we're cosmopolitan enough to know the difference between Jasper Johns and Casper the Friendly Ghost. Plus our son, a generation further removed from the Scottish stone age, is completing a degree in fine arts, and when he passed through his "folk art" phase it was necessary as doting parents to flip through a handful

William Baldwin

Captain Joe Cumbee.

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William Baldwin

Joe Cumbee's "Black Horse, White Horse," circa 1972.

of folk art paperbacks. We picked up a few points here and there, but even without this continuing education, we'd have stopped. In our travels in the greater realm of turnip truckdom, we'd never run away from a folk art exhibit, and weren't about to start now. Which brings us to Clayton, Georgia, and last summer.

We'd just spent a week in the Blue Ridge Mountains and after enjoying a leisurely, white-knuckled, seven-hour drive along the parkway, we were fortunate enough to arrive in Clayton. Fortunate just to arrive anywhere, actually. And where did we find ourselves but in the midst of a month-long folk art exhibit spread out over three galleries. Before dark we reached the first of these and met a genial Atlanta art dealer, who sold us a crude little painting done by the daughter of a famous Florida "root carver." Just four slabs of white paint with pink blobs for heads, yellow smudged halos, and some Christmas tree-like decorations for the borders, this little icon hangs in our living room now. And small world. Paying with a check we discovered that the dealer's ninety-six-year-old grandmother had been born and raised at the lighthouse just off from our home and had been very close to my wife's family. Surely a good omen. We took heart and checked into the Clayton Hotel. In the morning we'd visit the other galleries to see the "Finsters."

Finster, of course, is Howard Finster, certainly the most famous folk artist alive. A former north Georgia evangelist, he has painted album covers for a rock group and taken commissions from the Coca-Cola Company. A Finster recently sold sight unseen for twenty-five thousand dollars. He doesn't do it for the money though (he really doesn't). He paints to spread God's word, and every painting is packed with the north Georgia equivalent of John Bunyan imagery and often lengthy hand-lettered morals, admonitions, and Scripture.

The next morning we were waiting when the Main Street Gallery opened. No Finsters in immediate sight, but the window was filled with the whimsical work of A.E. Miller. Painted on sheet metal, these showed Indians fighting dinosaurs and other such oddities. What's more, unlike the few Finsters inside, these were affordable. At least they would have been, except the proprietor told us they were hording Millers in Atlanta so they'd decided not to sell theirs. I asked her what the difference was between hording in Atlanta and not selling in Clayton? She said if it was up to her we could have one but her partners said no.

The last gallery was several miles out of town on the grounds of an artists' and writers' retreat. Here we were to find the bulk of the Finsters and could probably get a Miller sold to us. Maybe. The grounds were covered with curious Miller whirly-gigs—dinosaur weather vanes with propellers—but the gallery was closed. I wandered around back and into a second floor music room where a man sat at a desk writing. He kindly offered to let us in. Walking back I asked if he was a musician, and he said he was a philosopher from a university in Virginia. He'd been writing philosophy. I told him I'd just spent the week in the mountains with my friend Jack. Jack was also a philosopher but he hadn't written any in at least twenty years. In fact, he rarely mentioned philosophy. The Virginia philosopher asked me what Jack said when he did mention it, and I told him that once Jack had said, "Under certain circumstances anyone is capable of killing his wife." The Virginia philosopher thought about this a good thirty seconds and then agreed. He said, "He's right. Under certain circumstances anyone is capable of killing anyone else."

Now, I'm not including this bit of conversation to suggest the sad permissiveness to which Southern philosophy studies have sunk. Nor am I including it because it gave my wife (overhearing it from the far side of the still locked door) a few curious if not downright anxious moments. I'm including it because this was all it took to distract me from the fact that we'd entered through the back door and just walked through the entire exhibit. The art wasn't commanding our attention. It wasn't jumping off the wall screaming "admire me" or "buy me" or anything else.

We let my wife in, and though I could tell the Virginia philosopher wasn't a fan, he was good-natured enough to hang around while we browsed. Howard Finster predominated, God's words made flesh, so to speak. Familiar. I'd managed to visit an early Gothic cathedral once, and the enthusiasm of its earlier paintings and stained glass didn't seem so far removed from what the Georgia evangelist was attempting. Indeed, the angular, one-dimensional disciples and saints could even pass as distant cousins. Still, architecture aside, the cathedral art was so much more compelling—the promises so much more promising—that you wondered if the message was the same. No matter how clever and joyous the work of Howard Finster is (and it's both), the idea that a glimpse of Elvis and a Coca-Cola are among the primary rewards of both this world and the next did little to comfort this poor sinner.

Another artist represented, Mose Tolliver, was also known to me, at least from books. One of his paintings, "Man on Scooter," I'd seen reproduced. Here was the original for a few hundred dollars. You could see the man and you could see the scooter. Maybe a dozen dabs of paint in all. It

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was a strange, funny little muddle, but I couldn't help recalling a visit to the Tate Gallery. Van Gogh's sunflower paintings may be overpublicized and overpriced but they are capable of dominating an entire gallery wall. "Man on Scooter" was barely holding down a few square inches. On the other hand, the artist wasn't charging thirty-something million either. In the rapidly escalating folk art market Tolliver is still considered a very good buy.

But we were looking for a real bargain and got one. Yes, an unhorded A.E. Miller for a very modest sum. It's a squat sheet metal Uncle Sam with the words "Oscar Blows" on top of his head. Miller has a friend Oscar who drives into his yard and blows the horn—an act that's inspired dozens of these "Blow, Oscar, Blow" creations.

That was it. Goodbye, Clayton, Georgia. Hello, McClellanville, South Carolina. I'm told "Oscar Blows" is now worth three times what we paid so in another year we'll have salvaged the price of the hotel room. Good. That's about as far as I want to get involved in the business end of folk art. And "Oscar Blows" is about as much social commentary as I'm up to. In fact, though we were happy with him and the four little angels, I still feel a bit guilty about carrying them across state lines. This may be celebrating the rural Southern experience, but my wife and I are not directly connected to the lives of these painters. Their community is not ours, nor is their adventure. While these paintings certainly didn't depend on this level of intimacy to succeed, I couldn't help thinking we were buying (at a cut rate) what should be a very personal form of expression.

And that brings us to Captain Joe Cumbee. I'd gotten this far in this essay and then set it aside for a month waiting for the white heat of inspiration to spur me to a conclusion. None came, but then a friend called from the state museum to tell me that my old buddy Captain Joe had received South Carolina's Heritage Award. Only four "craftsmen" are selected each year, and far as she knew Joe was the first folk artist ever to win. My museum friend was excited about this and so was I, for we both recognize that Captain Joe is the real thing.

My first job out of graduate school (many years ago) was to work with this retired tugboat captain as a "ship's carpenter"—a rather exacting discipline Joe administered almost completely with a yard axe. Widowed sometime before, he'd recently remarried, an occasion happy enough to renew his interest in painting, and he showed me several works. Since I'd just been studying the Surrealists for a year and a half and had a degree, I felt qualified enough to tell him he was a very good artist and could probably even make a living at it. He shrugged off this compliment, went shrimping next, and then back to running an ocean-going tug. He'd made his last trip while well into his 70's—a barge load of Christmas trees to Venezuela. A premonition told him the aging tug wouldn't survive another such voyage. It didn't, but by then he was home for good—puttering and drinking black coffee.

I'd been told to give the state a week to notify him of the award and then I could go out and congratulate him myself. Short trip. He only lives five miles away, but to my shame, I haven't seen him in two years. At his trailer, I find little has changed. He's seated in a living room piled high with clutter, watching TV, drinking black coffee. "Old Billy Baldwin," he keeps repeating. "Where you been?" Good question. The walls are lined with paintings, at least half of them his. I remember most. The houses of his make-believe seaside communities shrink from the canvas in curious cubist distortions, but the boats are always perfectly proportioned. He's laughed many times about his failure to make the transition from sea to land. There are only two new works, drawings in colored pencil of a local landmark, the Deer Head Oak. He's drawn from memory. The tree limbs climb to the sky in thick green intertwining arms. Not limbs or even antlers. Not a live oak. Maybe an exotic boab growing at least two continents away. He tells me the first tree wasn't right because there were no children playing in it. The second drawing corrected that. In the corner the TV still runs. A talk show where the topic for the day is nudity in the home. Naked parents wandering around in front of naked children in suburban America. Joe has drawn clothes on the tree children.

I sip my coffee and congratulate him on being one of the state's Heritage winners. He hasn't heard the news and asks what it means. I say that I guess it means he's one of the best folk artists in South Carolina. For this year, at least, one of the very best. He smiles and says "I'll be dog gone."

That's his response in total. He hasn't painted or even drawn in months. "I'm eighty-three years old," he says. "My eyes don't see. My hands don't go where I tell them." But even as he says this his thick fingers cut the air between us—an act of pure expression I've been observing for a quarter of a century and one I assume is far older. Joe told me once that he'd started painting on sail canvas with white lead for a gesso. That puts his career back to the age of sail when he was a fourteen-year-old cabin boy on a rum-running schooner. On this visit, though, I ask just how long he has been painting. He answers, "All my life."

"Old lady Peacock. She told me I could draw. She meant well but I didn't know it then. Wouldn't let go of me. I quit school just to escape old lady Peacock." He's talking about the fourth grade.

On the TV a game show flashes on. Blinking lights and the promise of a life far away filled with chrome-plated mechanical garbage. We only stop to watch when this frenzy is occasionally interrupted by a stern-faced reporter announcing the latest on Iraq's sadly belated attempts to surrender. The captain and I are catching up. We discuss old times and new times, everything, in fact, but art. Finally that too. He says, "All my grandchildren want to draw. My great-granddaughter drew this one." He slides the paper toward me. "Said 'It's a boat, granddad. It's a boat.'"

Indeed, it is a boat. A high-bowed craft with a narrow two-story cabin well forward. One round window and one square. Centered on the deck a squiggly mast flying a single lopsided pennant. It's a bit too sketchy to identify the exact boat depicted, but the impulse to create is familiar enough. And a child's unsteady hand has printed across the bottom, "I LOVE YOU." So, that's that. Or to quote the master, "I'll be dog gone."

William Baldwin writes from McClellanville, South Carolina.

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The Art of Ignaz Friedman

by J.O. Tate

The digitalization of recorded sound proceeds apace, and one of the best results is the refurbishment of old recordings. The Edison cylinders and 78's of our grandparents' and great-grandparents' world are being processed into compact discs, saving space, time, and—best of all—preserving the music of worlds fast fading into oblivion.

Taking the advice of the fellow who told me to put my money in CDs, I have found that what was true with the old technology is true for the new. There's so much indispensable music-making from two and three generations ago that we are often justified in ignoring contemporary hype about performance—and even sound. There are some things that just don't get any better.

I have in mind various vocal and violin and orchestral performances from fifty and sixty years ago. And I think too of "the Golden Age of Pianism," when Ignacy Jan Paderewski, Leopold Godowsky, Moriz Rosenthal, Sergei Rachmaninoff, Josef Hofmann, and Alfred Cortot graced the stages of this country and the world. I have not omitted the name of Ignaz Friedman, of course, but rather singled it out for a special citation.

The recent release of "Ignaz Friedman: The Complete Solo Recordings 1923-1936" on the Pearl label is a cause not only for rejoicing but for acquisition (Pearl IF 2000; 4 CD boxed set; imported from England by KOCH International). This gathering of nearly five hours of imperishable performances is a "must have," an opportunity, a privilege, and a pleasure. This collection is a superb access to a vanished world and an evaporated culture. Ignaz Friedman was a remarkable individual, no doubt; yet through him we can hear the voice not only of his immediate background but of the 19th century.

That sound emanated in Friedman's case from "a local habitation and a name." Born in 1882 in Podgorze, a suburb of Krakow, Friedman was surrounded by the music of his family's itinerant orchestra—his father played with Josef Hofmann's father in a Krakow theater. And he was imbued too with the Polish culture and language, so that later he would say, when asked why he played the Chopin mazurkas so brilliantly, that he had danced mazurkas as a boy and that the Polish language held the rhythmic secrets he knew.

But Friedman was also a child prodigy who was lucky to have a teacher as wise as Flora Grzywinska, who developed his piano technique and knowledge of the whole of musical culture. By 1901 Friedman was ready for the greatest of piano teachers: he studied with Leschetizky in Vienna alongside Gabrilovitsch, Moisiewitch, Schnabel, and Horszowski—the last of whom still plays today. Friedman played the first concerti of Brahms, Tchaikovsky, and Liszt for his Vienna debut in 1904; and Busoni, Godowsky, and Rosenthal were in the enthusiastic audience.

Ignaz Friedman toured the world and played some three thousand concerts in the next forty years. The Nazis pushed him out of Europe so that he spent the Second World War in Australia and New Zealand. His left hand betrayed him in 1943; his health declined and he died in Sydney in 1948—a long way from Krakow and the sound of his father's Jewish band.

The sounds Friedman left behind are compelling; they are also reminders of what he *didn't* leave behind. His enormous repertory died with him, particularly the big pieces and all of the chamber music with one large exception. But all thoughts of lost opportunities, rejected recordings, and discarded air-checks must be set aside when we are confronted by the wealth offered by the Pearl collection. What we have is considerable, and greatly magnified by its intensity.

The first thing to be said about the recordings of Friedman is that they seem to be the very definition of "beautiful tone." The sound is well modulated, but it is not overrefined. It is a rich blend, a synthesis of colors, and sometimes an outrage of suggestions and overtones. Friedman is no "right-handed pianist," and the left hand roars and whispers in a way that's reminiscent of Rachmaninoff and

Warren Chappell

Cortot. No one has ever floated a melody above its accompanying figure with more shrewdness, more resource, or a more ravishing *legato* than Ignaz Friedman. The recording perspective, "from the bottom up," is an image of his sonority, not an engineer's trick, and must make one wonder about the pretensions of today's technology. The sound, far from antique or constricted, is rich and reminds me of Horowitz's late work for Deutsche Grammophon; or perhaps I should say that one Romantic giant had much the same palette as another.

The slight swish or transcribed scratch in the background reminds us that we are listening to a series of 78's, but there's no annoyance to the experience. Because of Friedman's mastery of his instrument, the sound is actually

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superior to many of today's pallid products. And the performances themselves, after delighting, must appall by their revelation of what has been lost by an insistent puritanism and reductive abstraction. The ideology of modernism killed the spirit of music, which will be recovered by a return to the roots—and by a study of recordings such as these.

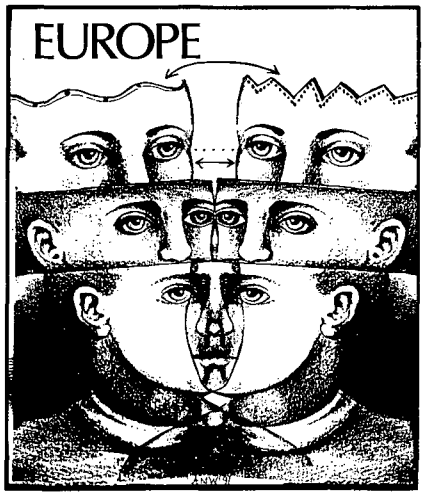
The best of Friedman's legacy is two series of Romantic jewels, nine of Mendelssohn's *Songs Without Words*, and twelve Chopin mazurkas, with duplications. His recordings of these pieces are unquestionably the best ever made: the Mendelssohn is fresh, spontaneous, sweet, and restrained. The mazurkas are exuberant, tender, and surprising, with a squeeze-box or taffy-pull *rubato* that makes these perhaps the most kinetic of all piano recordings, insinuating miracles of imagination and insight. And for these two series alone, the Pearl collection is mandatory.

But there is much more. Friedman's uncanny recording of Chopin's Nocturne in E flat Op. 55 No. 2 has often been called the greatest recording of any of the Nocturnes. Vladimir Horowitz thought that his version of the Chopin Etude Op. 10 No. 7 in C was unsurpassed. Friedman's renditions of various Etudes deserve comparison with those of Cortot and Lhevinne. And besides these and others, there is a "Moonlight" sonata, an unsuccessful Grieg concerto, and a host of character pieces and minor items of great appeal. It's no accident that Friedman can put over pieces on the piano made famous by charmers like Fritz Kreisler and Richard Tauber.

There is one Friedman recording not included in the Pearl set, and it's a major one: his only piece of chamber music, his only collaboration with a peer. Bronislaw Huberman recorded the "Kreutzer" sonata with Friedman in 1934. Paired with Huberman's 1930 recording of the Beethoven violin concerto conducted by George Szell, it's available on silver disc (EMI CDH 7 63194 2). Such a weight of Beethoven will no doubt attract those music lovers who care about Friedman and Huberman, as well as those who want to have one of the greatest recordings of the greatest violin concertos.

Thus Ignaz Friedman's pianism has been preserved in a new medium, one that should last "forever." Though his 19th-century spirit clashes with the computer age, still it's nice to know, while relishing his sometimes rollicking performances, that you don't have to turn the 78 over every three minutes. In that sense, the compact disc returns us to a more relaxed approach to music and a less hurried sense of life itself. In such a state, we can marvel at Friedman's powerful ability to project the lyric, the dramatic, and even the terpsichorean elements of music.

J.O. Tate is a professor of English at Dowling College on Long Island.



Exodus From the East

by Tomislav Sunic

Immigration in Europe

Until recently everybody thought that the threat of the Soviet Union lay in its strength; today everybody wisely claims it lies in its weakness. For almost a century the sheer weight and size of the communist monolith made us shudder with fear. Nowadays the monolith is breaking up into parts that, like comets, threaten to slam into Western capitals. Once upon a time we were appalled that the communist walls barred the route to the promising West. Today we are worried that out of the crumbled walls roads may be constructed for the exodus from the East. The millions of East Europeans and Soviets scrambling out of their homelands may soon make us regret the passing of the world that emerged out of Yalta.

According to Claude Chesnais, from the Paris Institute of Demographic Studies, between three and twenty million Soviet immigrants will flood Western countries within the next three years, a prospect that Bruno Tietz, the director of the Institute for Economic Research at the University of Saarland in Germany, already calls the largest *Völkerwanderung* since Attila. Soviet immigration is only the tip of the iceberg, considering that the decades-long African and Asian immigration to Europe is nowhere near an end. With its open-door policy Western Europe is poised to change its ethnic profile beyond recognition.

Of all European states Germany is in a particularly difficult position. Although the German quota for political asylum seekers is among the lowest in the Western world, Germany is the victim of a legal system that makes it virtually impossible to deport those who reside without permit on its territory. Last year alone 193,063 foreigners requested political asylum in Germany, of whom only 6,500 obtained the status of political refugees. The rest continue to linger in numerous German facilities in the hope of finding a legal loophole for obtaining permanent residency. Still reeling from its "unsuppressed past," Germany seems to be in no position to close its doors to East European economic migrants, or for that matter to expel dozens of thousands of Polish and Balkan Gypsies on the grounds that they are ineligible for the status of the politically persecuted. Moreover, with its declining birthrate, the lowest in Europe today, Germany, in the decades to come, is likely to become the hub of foreign immigration. The German Question may finally be resolved—once and for all.

How the mass exodus from east and south will square with the cozy picture of the common European home is not very clear. The optimistic scenarios about Europe 1992, conjured up by Eurocrats from Bonn to Brussels, may drown in the rising tide of foreigners, with unintended consequences for the

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entire European continent. One wonders what will integrate and assimilate the new arrivals, especially when the economic miracle ends and generous European welfare systems become financially strapped? The rise of virulent racism is bound to polarize Europe again and set back the mythical 1992 to what may likely look like a rerun of 1933—perhaps this time with a more savage outcome. Rival immigrant groups in Europe, in dealing with each other, usually exhibit none of the diplomatic niceties or self-hatred characteristic of their liberal hosts. The recent headlines in the European press talk of the Albanian refugees fighting turf battles with Arab immigrants in Marseilles and of the Vietnamese peddlers being bashed by itinerant Poles in Frankfurt. So goes the "one-world state."

Being essentially the jetsam of the ideology of globalism and the religion of human rights, the new immigrants from the East are already straining resources and creating a situation in Europe that resembles that in Los Angeles or New York. Deportees and exiles, the immigrants of old, have been replaced with economic vagrants who left their homeland of their own will. It appears that the new *International* of immigrants is more interested in celebrating the triumph of global democracy by joining the bustle and hustle of St. Paul in Hamburg, or the flesh-and-drug sensation of downtown Amsterdam, than in working on the fragile democratic institutions of their abandoned homelands.

Warren Chappell

Since time immemorial life in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union has proceeded with the slow-motion growth of barley, hardly reaching the pace of grand historical cycles. In Western Europe, by contrast, life can be lived in third gear, and if one can make it across the ocean, one can accelerate to fifth. Every East European and Soviet knows too well that west of Kiel and Trieste everything moves fast-forward—from fast food to fast sex. If one carefully observes the post-communist immigrants who are now roaming Western capitals, one may notice how they try to make eye contact with passersby, as if they want to show the world that they are the right audience for the nonstop light show. At the bottom of his heart, each East European and Soviet immigrant thinks that the West owes him something, and that his former life of communist misery must now be recompensed by the glamour and glitter of the West.

An Italian author recently wrote that communism failed in the East because it has succeeded in the West. To be sure, capitalism did not defeat communism because of its smart weapons or the babble about the rule of law; it won because it made better designer jeans and Carrera sunglasses that every Soviet soldier and every Romanian *apparatchik* now likes to sport. Ironically, the same Marxian ideals of welfarism, equality, and the culmination of the "providential state" that brutally foundered in the East, have shown their practicality in the West. The liberal democratic state seems to be reaching the final impasse of its history; and faithful to Marxian recipes, it is canceling itself out—without needing to face up to a Soviet invasion. Alexander Zinoviev, the Russian satirist, is probably right when he predicts that henceforth, the only invasion the West must contend with is the one by East European and Soviet immigrants.

It should be emphasized that to *Homo sovieticus* the liberal West does not represent an escape from equality, but the fulfillment of equality, and his hatred of communism grows in proportion to his craving for the already communized West. No Eastern immigrant wants to risk his life by embarking on an ulcer-causing uncertainty, and only a few wish to tinker with the dog-eat-dog liberalism now in the making in their former homes. Westerners commit a serious mistake when they assume that these departing anticommunists, with their hatred of communism, are actually repudiating the laziness they enjoyed for a good part of their communist life. The sad truth about the would-be Westernized East Europeans and Soviets is that they wish to combine the psychological predictability of the East with a heavy dose of credit card mentality. Very revealing, indeed, are their newly found pastimes of playing *toto lotto* or putting money into bogus insurance funds. Is it an accident that a large number of Poles recently voted for an obscure expatriate upstart with the body language of a self-made American? In a sense Tyminski is a lingering metaphor for the dream of every failed East European who, having been lied to for so many years, upon discovering even a minor disturbing truth about the West, refuses to believe it. The fatal attraction of liberalism does not lie in its addictive permissiveness, but in its seeming equality, which leads everybody to believe he can become Robert Redford or Armand Hammer in an afternoon shopping spree.

For centuries economic migration was unknown in Europe. Economic wealth was a phenomenon too rare and static to provoke envy. The affluent aristocracy, more accustomed to consuming, left trade to itinerant foreigners such as the Lombards or Jews. The notion of national patrimony had a sacred aspect for most Europeans, and on that notion, starting with the 16th century, the idea of the nation-state began to emerge. This traditional attitude toward wealth may also explain why economic envy, which Marxists have wrongly dubbed "class struggle," was nonexistent. With the beginning of the movement of capital and the deracination of labor, turmoil and revolution were bound to occur. Georges Sorel remarked that the poor usually tolerate the rooted wealth of their hereditary aristocracy much better than the mobile wealth of a monetary aristocracy, since the latter, while hypocritically preaching legal equality, usually creates horrendous economic inequalities in its search of profit.

What is today exceptional about mass immigration, writes Bruno Etienne, an expert on Arab immigration to France, is that it results less from real poverty and more from the action of global capitalism. Having invented the migratory work force, global capitalism is now in a position to displace people from one part of the globe to

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another, which in turn only weakens the sense of patriotism among both natives and immigrants. Is it an accident that both liberalism and communism, two doctrines preaching economic determinism, are also avowed enemies of historical and national consciousness? Is it an accident that for liberals true history starts only with 1789 and for communists with 1917, as if nothing preceded those dates?

Contrary to widespread belief, what really threatens Europe is not the increase in foreigners, but the Europeans' loss of historical and ethnic consciousness. The danger for the West is not uprooted individuals from the Third World, but an officially promoted multiculturalism that has completely blurred the line between immigrant and native. In a system of capitalist gadgets, people can become commodities too, and just as expendable.

Moreover, with the loud endorsement of the global world order, an African Muslim considers himself no less qualified for French citizenship than a Catholic and European Pole. With the English political system adopted by much of the Subcontinent, no logic can bar Indians or Pakistanis from Britain or Canada. And the illusion of automatic equality will lead even the most ignorant to the conclusion that their salvation lies in immigration. To date the West's only response, in order to stem the tide of foreign refugees, is to try to make a distinction between economic and political immigrants; as if in our liberal system any reason for immigration, other than an economic one, were allowed to exist!

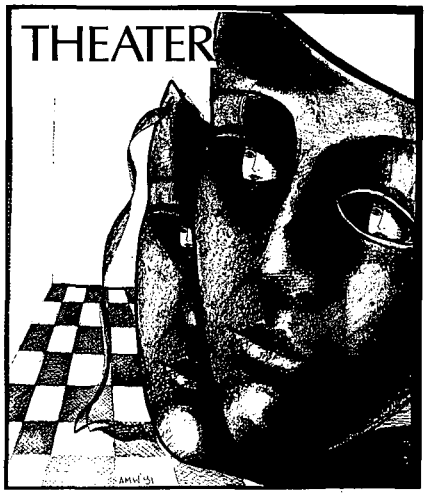
An East European citizen today is forced to live in a quasi-Third World economy, while just across the border he hears the buzz and the hum of the high-tech West. It is the nearness of liberal wealth that causes such frustration among immigrants, frustration a Westerner will never be able to grasp. A Western commercial shown on the Polish TV network will do more damage to an average Pole than thousands of Soviet tanks. The affluency is simply too erotic, too egalitarian, too tempting; to the point that every immigrant sees it as something that must belong to all humanity. The implosion of commercials can only feed the immigrant's hatred of those rich Westerners who had the good luck to be born at the right time and place. It is his own failure that he sees in them, just as a black will always see in a white racist the parody of his own existence. A century ago it would never have occurred to a Danubian peasant to curse his fortune; today a Romanian Gypsy roaming the Berlin Alexander Platz, or a Pole selling his fake porcelain ware in Frankfurt, lives in febrile certainty that some day he will become part of the Western wonderland. Catching up with the West is the new vocation of those waiting in line for the last trip of Noah's Ark.

One question worth asking is how Soviet and Eastern immigrants would have behaved if their former communist hell had miraculously turned into an economic paradise—if East German Panzer communism or Castro's Creole utopia had worked right from the outset. Would there still be those lamenting the killing fields? Probably not. When in the 50's the Gulag housed five million prisoners, the Western intelligentsia remained conspicuously mute, preferring instead to attend cocktail parties at the Soviet and Cuban embassies. When in the 80's the Gulag population shrank to five hundred, the same intelligentsia began staging anticommunist rallies in front of those very same embassies. It surely is no accident that the loudest Stalinist collaborators of yesteryear are also the most eloquent apostles of anticommunism today.

Yet the immigrant's illusions may not last for long. The liberal West makes promises to many, but delivers only to a chosen few. And most Westerners forget that the only achievable equality is that of poverty, for which wise people have invented the name of "communism."

In a system obsessed with economic rationality, wealth is already creating new and irrational appetites, which in turn will necessitate another rational solution. And what else is the spirit of totalitarianism but a rational attempt to solve mounting irrational problems?

Tomislav Sunic is the author of Against Democracy and Equality: The European New Right *(Peter Lang Publishing, Inc.). He teaches European politics at Juniata College in Huntingdon, Pennsylvania.*



Human Comedy

by Katherine Dalton

New American Plays in Louisville

American playwrights handle comedy better than tragedy, at least if this year's Humana Festival of New American Plays at Actors Theatre of Louisville is any gauge. Richard Strand's farce of corporate ladder-climbing, *The Death of Zukavsky*, and Jane Martin's broad comedy about lady wrestlers, *Cementville*, were the two high points of the festival, and even of the less successful plays the best moments were always comical ones, not serious.

The still-mysterious Jane Martin, who may or may not be ATL producing director Jon Jory and/or various other people, probably has a hit with *Cementville*. Tiger, Dani, Netty, and Lessa have been bumped from the coliseum by the ice show and banished to a peeling gym in Cementville, Tennessee, one of pro wrestling's lower circles of hell. Their promoter, Bigman, has managed to book as surprise challengers the biggest act in the business, two artificially constructed bottled blonde sisters, just out of jail and temporarily barred from the big leagues because of an unfortunate drug conviction and an all-too-public entanglement with the mayor of Los Angeles. Things go from bad to worse as the crowd turns ugly, as Dottie and Dolly's manager Mother Crocker

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Sally Parrish, Cynthia Carle, and Peggity Price in Jane Martin's Cementville.

threatens mob retaliation, and as the upstaged Dani (a/k/a Tarzana) and Lessa lose their cool.

On the negative side, all the humor is very bawdy, and all the Southern characters are exaggerated into a Harry Crews-ish mad-cracker extreme. We are supposed to accept that the infamous Dottie and Dolly are World Wrestling Federation material, but the bodysuits with tassels that they sport would never make it past the censors on TV. Nobody's ever accused pro wrestling of being in good taste, but it is a little cleaner than this. When in an effort to placate the "rubes" Mother Crocker sends out Dani and Nola to strip, we've descended to the Jell-O circuit.

That aside, the play is funny, and the colorful hick speech (the one-armed paperhanger-isms) is original hick speech. Only the end, in which a retired black boxer gives a long speech on the purer days of pro-sport, seems unfinished or at least inconclusive, but after letting the four winds out of Mount Haemus it is no mean feat to get them back in again.

This kind of depiction of Southern life is irritating to many Southerners, conscious as they are that the one area of the country in which children are still taught manners is invariably represented on stage and screen by a foul-mouthed Bubba. They should take comfort in the knowledge that the South is perhaps the only section of the country left with enough of an identity for there to be something identifiable to laugh at.

Richard Strand's farce *The Death of Zukavsky* should also see several more productions. In it three employees of a large corporation find themselves vying for a manager's job when Zukavsky shows up dead for one morning's meeting. You could see the end coming, but you really didn't care, because the interim jokes are original and the play's construction wonderfully tight. Especially funny was a scene in which A.C. Tattums explains to his competitor Anne Desmond why she will never go higher than level four—because she has too many moral scruples about taking money. ATL regulars Bill McNulty and Ray Fry were particularly good as, respectively, A.C. and his boss, Mr. Marlino, and Rod McLachlan (Barry) did very well as precisely the sort of dense apple-polisher who inevitably rises to the top.

Also well received was Shirley Lauro's *A Piece of My Heart*, about the war experiences and subsequent lives of five woman who served in Vietnam. Originally produced at the Philadelphia Festival Theatre for New Plays, it is timely to say the least. The message, as though anyone could miss it, is summed up by Leeann's "I want to never fight another war" at the end of act II: in the interim an intelligence officer's prediction of the Tet offensive is discounted (because she's black, or a woman, or perhaps because she writes "Chinese" when she means "Vietnamese"), a sweet Christian girl from Erie sees her boyfriend blown up in front of her eyes, and a Texas teenager suckered into singing for the USO is assaulted by some American officers. On their return only Sissy from Erie seems stable, and she ends up with Agent Orange disease, as does her little girl. Nobody escapes, most especially not the audience, which is put through the wringer along with Sissy and Whitney and Leeann.

Songs such as "Proud Mary" and "Down by the Riverside" help to complete the utter schmaltzification of war, as does the second act's *de rigueur* group therapy number, during which each woman finally breaks down completely. From the sniffles I heard, so did the audience. Perhaps the final blow is the fact that *A Piece of My Heart* is a docudrama—neither fish nor fowl—based heavily on Keith Walker's book of Vietnam vet interviews of the same title. To read the book is to read an interesting oral history about an exhilarating and terrible time, and to hear the stories of women who by and large have gleaned all the good they can from the experience, worked through the bad, and who are living relatively happy lives. (One mother of a child with Agent Orange disease is understandably still battling.) To see the play you would think every woman came back a basket case.

The worst embellishment of a life seems to be the character of Mary Jo. Her original, Bobbi Jo Pettit, found her five months of entertaining for the troops in 1967 hard but also so rewarding that she went back in '71. She speaks of getting dangerously isolated in a shack for four days, but surviving it unharmed, and says she was treated with care and respect by the troops she played for. When the fictionalized Mary Jo is accidently abandoned in a shack with her band for four days, she is raped by a group of Marines she had welcomed as her deliverers. (This comes out in the group therapy session—of course.)

Lee Blessing's *Down the Road* is a

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draw. Best known for his Broadway success *A Walk in the Woods*, Blessing's latest play concerns a true-crime team assigned to a Ted Bundy-like serial killer to help him tell his story. As the interviews progress both husband and wife start to question the morality of what they're doing, and Blessing skillfully traces their regression from control to submission, as they realize that the book of their career is at the mercy of this murderer. Their apologies to him are painful to watch. Unfortunately, despite all the breast-beating about morality, what we have here is one more exploitation of horror, and Blessing's craftsmanship and the good performances put in by Mark Shannon, Bernadette Sullivan, and Markus Flanagan cannot quite redeem the play.

Every year it seems there is one painful failure and this year it was the festival's only commissioned play, Paul Walker's *A Passenger Train of Sixty-One Coaches*. Walker is a true believer in experimental drama and has been quoted as saying that any technique outside the theatrical mainstream is fair game. What that translates to, in this play about Anthony Comstock, founder of the Society for the Suppression of Vice in late 19th-century New York, is one long third-person narrative with the lines broken up among the various characters. There are no scenes, per se, and everything, right down to the casting, is heavily ironic (Mr. Walker directed this play as well). Comstock's mother is played by an Asian actress, his doomed daughter by a young black actress, his adopted daughter by a man, George Bernard Shaw by a woman—no doubt if Mr. Walker had been able to get a horse to whinny the lines he would have had Cananero III up there as Comstock's wife. Anthony Comstock is hardly a sympathetic subject, and as a National Endowment for the Arts grantee Walker no doubt is especially sensitive on the topic of vice suppression. But the cacophony of *Sixty-One Coaches* is such that in the end you almost feel sorry for Comstock's memory, tossed around the stage in his underwear as he has been for an hour and a half.

Also experimental and also unsuccessful was Eduardo Muchado's story of the nationalization by Castro of his family's bus company, *In the Eye of the Hurricane*. Diane D'Aquila as Manuela was wonderful but could not save a play that was a campy tragedy, complete with a 52-year-old homosexual brother who salsaed when upset. Mario (Christopher McCann) looked upon his nephew as fair game, and the nationalization as his personal revenge upon his clearly much more capable brother-in-law for taking precedence in the family. None of this is really supposed to disturb us, or so I gathered, but if this is what passes for black humor in Cuba and Miami, then it does not translate.

Shem Bitterman's *Night-side*, about a florist's descent into madness following a crime she may or may not have witnessed from her shop window, is about strong stuff and hence dramatic. But there is no beauty to the language and no point—other than to portray madness—to the play.

All these plays were invited. As for the ten-minute play contest winners, there were two this year: Neal Bell's *Out the Window* and John Glore's *What She Found There*. Both were very workmanlike; *Out the Window* is a nice short about a man recovering from an accident, still imprisoned in a wheelchair, who wakes one morning after a particularly heady party to find himself stranded atop the kitchen table. John Glore's play is built around the conceit of Alice's doppelgänger passing through the looking glass into our world just as Alice goes through to hers. Anagrammatical Celia (played very well by Jennifer Hubbard) has just had a fling with Lou, a truck driver, and is trying to explain herself and her point of view to a man who has picked up more than he bargained for. She has some wonderful passages about her world-in-reverse. Without the sex it would be a beautiful short play, and with any luck Glore should be a playwright to watch for.

Once again ATL's regular company members put in some of the best performances of the festival, partly because they are generally very well cast in these productions (as was Adale O'Brien as Netty in *Cementville*, the wrestling Pajama Mama "who puts 'em to sleep"). There seemed to be a general consensus that this was one of ATL's better festival years, and if so there is no doubt it is because Jon Jory has left off commissioning novelists and returned to asking for plays from playwrights. Or perhaps the main problem was the idea of commissioning anybody—of recently commissioned plays only Romulus Linney's 2 was outstanding, and this year the festival's worst production was its one commission. For next year David Henry Hwang, the author of *M. Butterfly*, has agreed to write a play on the subject of interracial marriage, and ATL is still hoping to get something out of novelist E.L. Doctorow. Only time will tell whether Jory was right to bet on either.

Katherine Dalton is the managing editor of Chronicles.

Richard C. Trigg

From Death of Zukavsky.

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Aliens and the Alienated

by William R. Hawkins

The Great Red Hope

American leftists today yearn for a more receptive proletariat. They have virtually given up on the white working class, which they feel has been subverted by bourgeois values and the consumer society. Instead they have turned towards people of non-European stock to build a new base. The anti-Western "multiculturalism" that has become so controversial at universities across the country cannot be separated from the grass-roots activism seeking to hold together nonwhite racial voting blocs and to open America's borders to Third World immigrants.

Paul Buhle, a Marxist who favors more immigration, explained in his book *Marxism in the U.S.A.* (1987) why the past use of this strategy makes it so appealing today:

> The [Communist] Party encouraged the uncertain relationship between revolutionary politics and ethnic culture, providing the immigrants with essential services: labor defense, propaganda, English-language spokesmen and organizational contacts. The groups in return gave the bulk of funds for the Party's operation, produced enthusiastic crowds, and formed an authentic radical proletariat. And by the thousands these immigrants proved doggedly loyal, unlike the American recruits.

Buhle envisions Latin American liberation theology as the means to return communism to its chiliastic roots. The collapse of secular socialism has been offset by the "rise of religious-based support groups for international revolution." Again, the failure of the American working class to embrace revolution leads to a frightening solution: the racial and religious liquidation of the undeserving native proletariat. "Immigration patterns to the United States have altered drastically from the very geographical direction of the new revolutionary faith," notes Buhle. "At the present rate, in less than a century, more than half of the U.S. population will be of Caribbean Basin origin. Unlike the European immigrants, their radicalism is based not in the secular left but in the Church."

In *Prisoners of the American Dream* (1985) Mike Davis, another Marxist theoretician, foresees an alliance of nonwhite Americans and Third World revolutionaries, all taking their marching orders from white Leninists like himself. To be sure, the dream of a black "vanguard" is not new; it was popular in both Old and New Left circles during the 1960's. But the rise in America's Hispanic population (discovered in the late 1970's and the subject of intense political battles over immigration reform since the early 1980's) has given it a fresh twist: the "real weak link in the domestic base of American imperialism," Davis claims, "is a black and Hispanic working class, fifty million strong. This is the nation within a nation, society within a society, that alone possesses the numerical and positional strength to undermine the American empire from within." Socialism can be brought to the U.S. "by virtue of a combined hemispheric process of revolt that overlaps boundaries and interlaces movements."

When Marxist professor James D. Cockcroft of Rutgers said that "American democracy may well be the ultimate domino," in his book on immigration policy *Outlaws in the Promised Land* (1986), he uses the reverse logic for which leftists are so well-known. He argues that

> since Vietnam, this society has displayed a deepening "anti-communist," racist, nativist, and class-biased character in its treatment of immigrants and in its immigration policy. . . . It has also experienced a wave of legislative, administrative, and court decisions that may curtail the basic civil rights of not only immigrants but of all U.S. citizens.

His examples include such dangers as allowing the police more discretion in questioning suspects and submitting evidence. He denounces in general terms "the dangerously open-ended grounds of 'over-riding considerations of public safety.'" He also dismisses measures prompted by "national security" and the specter of terrorism. "These proposed laws could make it illegal to protest U.S. government policy anywhere." He voices a special concern for the fate of "anti-interventionist and antinuclear groups." But Cockcroft sees help on the way:

> The emergence of a Latino minority outnumbering American blacks and the likelihood of its rapid growth during the spread of turmoil in Latin America adds to an ever more assertive bloc of voters anxious to affect national and foreign policies in ways not necessarily compatible with the goals of recent Presidents and the transnational corporations.

It is the aim of these radicals to increase the level of conflict as much as possible; to kick over the "melting pot" that has served in the past to transform a "nation of immigrants" into the United States. Neoconservative advocates of increased immigration want to give preference to professionals, skilled workers, anticommunist refugees, and Europeans (a step in this direction having been taken by the 1990 Kennedy-Simpson bill) who, they say, will benefit the country. Leftist advocates of an open border hope to build a larger underclass of alienated anti-Western proletarians from the mass of unskilled and half-literate illegals who fill sweat-

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shops and poverty-level service jobs. They want a policy that will harm the United States as presently constituted. This objective is so clear that leftists feel that the defenders of the status quo must surely see it and be acting to counter it. "The threat of a strong Latino population . . . leads the government to attempt further control over immigration," claims Cockcroft.

The Ford Foundation has played a major role in bankrolling left-wing groups involved in immigration projects. In its 1984 study *Hispanics: Challenges and Opportunities*, Ford announced an initiative to "dispel" the following image:

> The growing Hispanic population of the United States is a source of controversy and, at times, of apprehension among non-Hispanics. To some, that population represents a kind of "fifth-column" threatening to rend the nation's social fabric through its apparent unwillingness to assimilate; to deprive other minorities and displaced blue collar workers of jobs by accepting work at low and substandard wages; and to act as a monolithic and powerful special-interest group on such issues as immigration and bilingual education.

However, Ford's solution was not to dispute the image but to defend and expand upon it. "What Hispanics have need of today is what blacks needed twenty-five years ago: greater knowledge and understanding of their economic, social, and political situation and of the roots of their disadvantage, and the development of an infrastructure that will increase their participation in the mainstream of society." Ford has committed tens of millions of dollars to this end, supporting over two hundred groups working to liberalize American immigration laws.

One of the larger recipients of Ford money is the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Foundation (MALDEF). Between 1982 and 1988 MALDEF collected over $6 million from Ford, and it jumped to prominence during the debate over the Simpson-Mazzoli Immigration Reform Act of 1986. MALDEF provides a prime example of the radicalization of the immigration debate. As MALDEF's associate counsel John E. Huerta stated at a 1983 immigration conference organized by Wayne Cornelius' Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies:

> We seem to be headed for a new kind of McCarthyism in this country, one that might be called Simpsonism, after Senator Alan Simpson of Wyoming. Simpson has no blacks in his community, no undocumented workers, not even Hispanics displacing the white labor force. He has no political base other than a group of white voters in his community who feel threatened, who identify with "white power."

(The Center received over $1 million from Ford during the 1980's. Huerta was then also vice president of the National Lawyers Guild.)

MALDEF refuses to accept that any immigration reform advocates could have legitimate motives, calling them "groups that use a supposed concern for the poor, the environment, and the economy to turn public opinion against dark-skinned immigrants." MALDEF opposes employer sanctions, interior enforcement, and any increase in border security.

MALDEF is an example of the shift from assimilation to autonomy among immigrants. MALDEF was created in 1968 by members of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), who had obtained a $2.2 million grant from Ford to create a Hispanic equivalent of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund. LULAC was primarily a middle-class civil rights organization attempting to end discrimination against all Mexican-American citizens. Its code stated: "Respect your citizenship; honor your country, maintain its traditions in the minds of your children; incorporate yourself in the culture and civilization." The LULAC constitution stated that the goal was "to develop within the members of our race the purest and most perfect type of a true and loyal citizen of the United States."

LULAC warned its members not to associate with groups that stressed Mexican nationalism or Hispanic separatism. It wished to avoid any charge of being a group of radicals or agitators. LULAC organized classes in English and in American civics. Mario T. Garcia has said of LULAC, "It believed that the 'genius' and 'quality' of Americans had made the United States great and that Mexican-Americans should develop such virtues. These included individualism. LULAC maintained that only in the United States could citizens progress and retain their individuality."

However, MALDEF nonetheless fell victim to the New Left, becoming involved in the antiwar movement and feminism as well as the protection of illegal aliens. The battle over bilingual (actually multilingual, as other minority groups joined the fray) education was part of the larger struggle. When the question is whether schools are to help minorities assimilate into American society or to help them live outside American society, MALDEF chooses separatism, even irredentism. In its official history, MALDEF traces its origins back to "The expansionistic fervor of the newly forming United States. . . . If the land of the Southwest could speak, it would have an amazing story to tell. . . . The story of a people who were conquered and brutally subjugated." A political *Reconquista* of the Southwest plays a role in much of leftist thought on both sides of the

LIBERAL ARTS

DANCING WITH WOLVES

According to the Census Bureau, the American Indian population is soaring—up 38 percent in the last ten years. This increase is too large to be accounted for by the birthrate, which leaves only one cause: the number of people wanting to be identified as Indians—based on a fraction of Indian ancestry, or the myth of Indian ancestry, or on nothing at all—is soaring.

As Joanne Jacobs, a columnist for the San Jose *Mercury News*, wrote last April 3, it's not only that "affirmative action rewards minority status," and that "being an Indian means never having to say you're sorry for Wounded Knee." In "urban, yuppified, angst-happy America, Indians are perceived as spiritually correct people, conserving rather than destroying, being rather than consuming." Being an Indian means you "can get all the historical cachet, without the pain."

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border.

What happened at MALDEF was part of a larger transformation outlined by Armando Gutierrez in *Dissent*:

> While at first Chicanos appeared to accept the negative impact of illegals, the reversal of Chicano opinion represents one of the more dramatic instances of the effectiveness of the Chicano left . . . to cement a solidarity between Mexican illegals and Chicanos. . . . The Chicano intelligentsia has largely moved from a colonial analysis of Chicano conditions to a Marxist orientation.

Another Ford-funded project is the Joint Center for Political Studies, a black think-tank that stresses "the demographic trends that will make minorities a majority of the U.S. population at the turn of the century are beginning to be felt. The time has come for black and white leaders to change some of the references and terms of the public policy debate in America. . . . Blacks are already approaching twenty percent of the American labor force . . . in the 21st century we are looking at a labor force that is half black and brown."

These radical ideas have worked their way into the Democratic Party via Jesse Jackson. In her tract *The Rainbow Challenge: The Jackson Campaign and the Future of Politics*, former Jackson aide Sheila D. Collins writes that, "if current immigration and birthrates continue, by the year 2000, Latinos will be the largest ethnic group in the United States. Since 85 percent of all Spanish-speaking people are concentrated in nine states and twenty cities that control 193 (or 71 percent) of the electoral votes needed to win the Presidency, they constitute a critical swing vote in future elections."

The radical plan, of course, has no guarantee of success. The United States still has the sovereign ability to control both immigration and the terms on which it will grant the rights of citizenship. And American society can still deploy great social pressure on behalf of assimilation. However, the extent to which well-organized and well-financed groups are working to undermine both national and social authority under the guise of multiculturalism and civil rights is not well-known. Adequate countermeasures are therefore not being implemented.

Ernest Renan wrote movingly of the nation as "A living soul, a spiritual principle."

> Two things . . . constitute this soul, this spiritual principle. . . . One is the common possession of a rich heritage of memories; the other is the actual consent, the desire to live together, the will to preserve worthily the undivided inheritance which has been handed down. . . . To have shared glories in the past, a common will to do them still, these are the essential conditions of a people.

The assimilation of immigrants into this consensus, even the adoption of the national "memories," is no different from the assimilation experienced by each new generation of native-born citizens. As Renan argued, this process is not a matter of race, ethnicity, or religion. Anyone who wants to carry on the heritage can claim it for himself, as have generations of immigrants. It is the worthiness of the American heritage that is under attack. It is this heritage, not just the geographical border of the United States, that must be defended.

William R. Hawkins is president of the Hamilton Center for National Security in Knoxville, Tennessee.

GREAT TOPICS, GREAT ISSUES

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Southern Writing — March 1991 — George Garrett on the state of Southern letters, Madison Smartt Bell on the short story, Dabney Stuart on Fred Chappell, Fred Chappell's story "Ancestors," and poems by James Seay and R.H.W. Dillard. Plus Henry Taylor and Kelly Cherry on Southern poetry, George Core on the literary quarterlies, and Steven Goldberg on the teaching of sociology.

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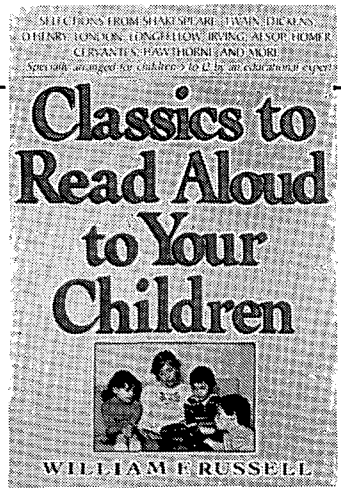
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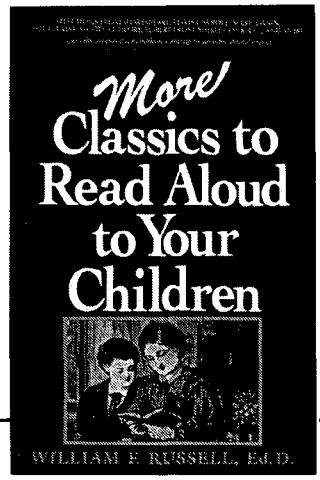

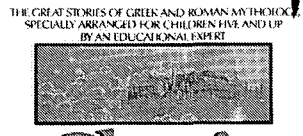

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